■ **BUSINESS / B1**

Emotional changing of the guard at Ayala: Don Jaime turns over control to Jaza

■ **METRO / A21**

QC Rep. Nanette Castelo-Daza charged with graft by ex-employee

■ **NEWS / A9**

Oil firms announce another cut in LPG prices, 2nd in 7 days

■ **WORLD / A26**

President Bush authorized Iraq intel leaks, says ex-White House aide

Call centers to help wean RP away from OFW dollars

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES LOOKS TO THE BOOMING BUSINESS process outsourcing and call center industry to help wean it from its reliance on the money that overseas Filipino workers bring in and to boost its potential for economic growth, according to National Economic Development Authority.

The government will also be investing heavily

CALL CENTERS/ A5

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Saturday, April 8, 2006 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 121 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Prosecutor says he's no GMA gofer; judge says, 'Noted'

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE LONE ELECTRIC FAN in a corner of the courtroom could blow only a whisper of air and Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco was in a swelter. The fire in his

PROSECUTOR/ A6

TALAGA LANG, HA?

Cha-cha drive alarms CBCP

Pastoral letter scores 'haste' in people's initiative

By Christian V. Esguerra
in Manila
and Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

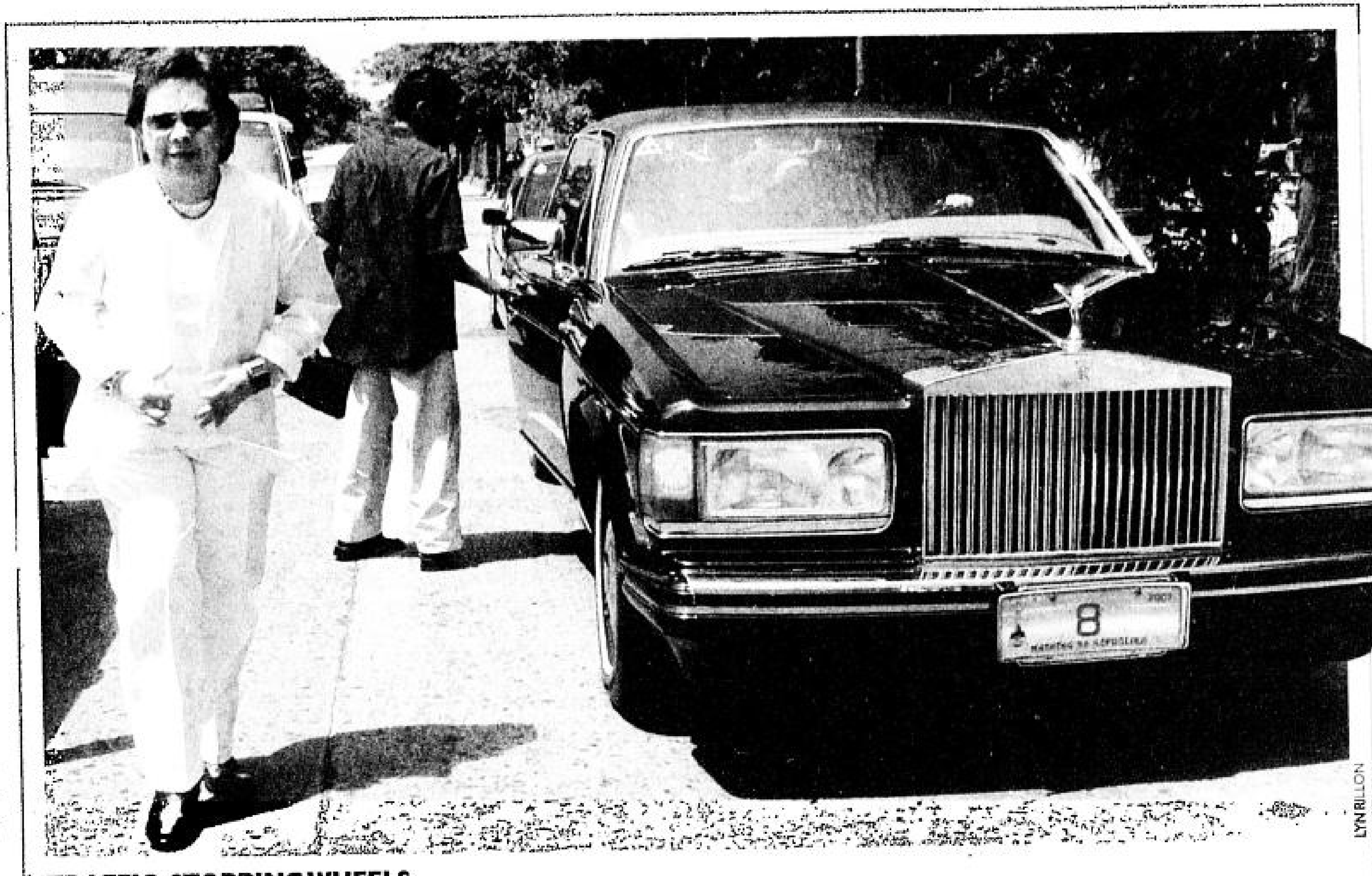
THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS Conference of the Philippines is alarmed by the administration-backed people's initiative to amend the 1987 Constitution and pave the way for a parliamentary system of government.

It said in a pastoral letter released yesterday that the exercise was "dangerously unclear and open to manipulation by groups with self-serving interests," and that "vigilance, education, [and] principled opposition may be necessary steps to take."

"We view with alarm the present signature campaign endorsed by the government," the CBCP president, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, wrote in behalf of the group's 122 members.

The bishops made clear that they were not against Charter change, but expressed reservations about the timing and supposed "haste" with which the ex-

CHA-CHA/ A15


LYN RILLON

TRAFFIC-STOPPING WHEELS
On her first term, Rep. Annie Susano (Lakas-CMD, 2nd District, Novaliches) comes and goes in great style. Here, she hops out of her Rolls Royce to attend the launch of the Barangay Food Terminal on Batasan Road, Quezon City. Her family owns the R.L. Susano Realty Corp.

Even the dead got fertilizers, COA reports

By Philip C. Tubeza

WHAT USE WOULD THE DEAD have of fertilizers?

According to the final Commission on Audit report on the P728 million fertilizer fund scandal, even the nonliving and the nonfarming were among the listed beneficiaries of fertilizers bought with the funds of the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) program.

The COA also discovered that some of the 15 nongovernment organizations (NGOs) that received a total of P150.6 million in fertilizer funds were "ghost" organizations. They were either not registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission or could not be found in their declared addresses.

The audit body's consolidated report, dated March 31, 2006, was prepared by six auditors who conducted a special audit and ocular inspections nationwide.

The report, which was submitted to the Senate last Tuesday, said the fertilizers bought with the P728 million fund were overpriced by 682 percent, or by P128 million.

The 33-page report said the Department of Agriculture did not set up any system of rules or guidelines to rationalize the distribution of the farm inputs.

"The lack of basic rules resulted in a hazy accountability for the government funds," the report said.

It said "deceased persons" and people who were not engaged in farming were included in the list of beneficiaries in the Ilocos region.

In Magsingal, Ilocos Sur, 103 listed recipients who were supposed to receive 366 bottles of fertilizers worth a total of P549,000

EVEN/ A6

New SC justice says court can reverse self

By Armand N. Nocum and Christine O. Avendaño

THE SUPREME COURT HAS been known to reverse itself on some issues, and it may do so on the issue of the people's initiative should it see the need.

That statement, indicating that the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo and others pushing for Charter change may yet claim victory in the controversial issue, was made by newly appointed Supreme Court Associate Justice Presbitero Velasco.

Speaking to reporters Thursday night after his Sigma Rho fraternity brothers hosted cocktails at the Makati Golf Club to honor him on his appointment, Velasco said the justices could reverse a decision depending on the facts surrounding a case.

"Of course, the high court can abandon an existing doctrine and come up with a new one," he said, when asked to comment on the recent observation made by former Associate Justice Vicente Mendoza that no Supreme Court decision was permanent because the tribunal could reverse itself "subject to the wisdom of the times."

Velasco pointed out that the tribunal had overturned its rulings on such cases as those in-

NEW SC/ A15

IN A ROYAL FIX. The taxman cometh for mother and daughter, Ruffa Gutierrez-Bektas and Annabelle Rama, owners of Royal Era. PDI PHOTOS

Ruffa, parents face raps for tax evasion

By Cynthia D. Balana and Armand N. Nocum

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue yesterday filed a tax evasion case against actress Ruffa Gutierrez-Bektas and her parents for nonpayment of P3.28 million in income tax for 2003 and 2004 from the earnings of their company, Royal Era Entertainment Inc.

BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag said the case, the 53rd filed with the Department of Justice under the bureau's RATE (Run After Tax Evaders) program, was based only on certain transactions made by the company.

Buñag said that the BIR was still looking into the other transactions made by the company when it was first put up in 1996.

In its complaint, the BIR said that the company, along with its officers, namely, Gutierrez-Bektas (treasurer), Eddie Gutierrez (president) and mother Annabelle Rama (managing director), committed at least four violations of the Tax Code.

Gutierrez-Bektas is the wife of Turkish millionaire Yilmaz Bektas and was Second-Princess in the 1993 Miss World beauty contest. Her father Eddie was a famous actor in the '60s while her mother Annabelle was an actress.

The BIR said the company—which produces movies, TV shows, concerts, the pro-

RUFFA/ A5

Judas was no villain, old document claims

WASHINGTON—JUDAS ISCARIOT, vilified as Christ's betrayer, acted at Jesus' request in turning him over to the authorities who crucified him, according to a 1,700-year-old copy of the "Gospel of Judas" unveiled on Thursday.

The Judas gospel was one of several ancient documents found in the Egyptian desert in 1970, was preserved and translated by a team of scholars and made public in an English translation by the National Geographic Society.

Its introduction says it is "the secret account of the revelation that Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot."

"He's the good guy in this portrayal," said Bart Ehrman, a religion professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "He's the only apostle who understands Jesus."

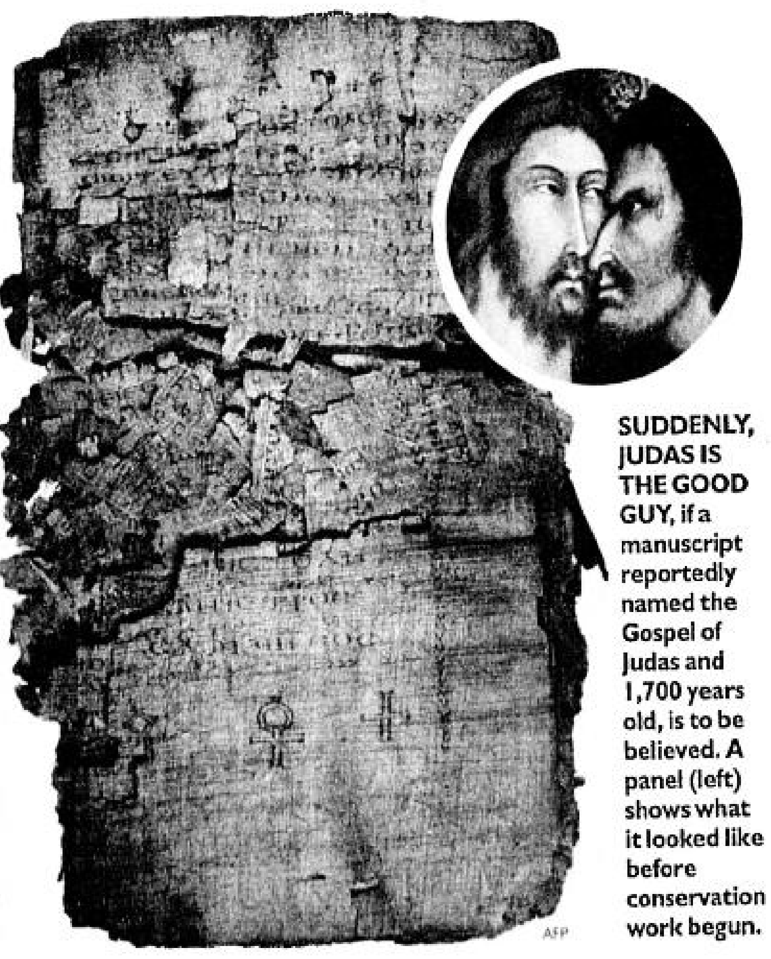
Later, it quotes Jesus as saying to Judas, "You will exceed all of them (the other disciples) for you will sacrifice the man who clothes me."

"The idea in this gospel is that Jesus, like all of us, is a trapped spirit, who is trapped in a material body," Ehrman said. "And salvation comes when we escape the materiality of our existence, and Judas is the one who makes it possible for him to escape by allowing for his body to be killed."

Rev. Donald Senior, president of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, said the document revealed the diversity and vitality in early Christianity.

"The question becomes ... does this tradition, this alternative story, if you like, in the gospel of Judas have a claim that in some sense is equal to the rival claim of

JUDAS/ A8


AFP

SUDDENLY, JUDAS IS THE GOOD GUY, if a manuscript reportedly named the Gospel of Judas and 1,700 years old, is to be believed. A panel (left) shows what it looked like before conservation work begun.

Cop could not send 3 sons to college but rejects ₱300,000 bribe offer

By Luige A. del Puerto

WITH JUST TWO MORE YEARS to go before he retires, this police officer wants to leave the force with his integrity unsoiled.

So he did what for him was the only logical thing to do when wads of P1,000 bills, amounting altogether to P300,000 in bribe money, were placed on his table one Sunday afternoon last month—he turned it down.

Not only that, Insp. Pedro Velasco also filed a charge of bribery against the man whom he said offered him the money: Samuel Lee, the importer he had personally arrested hours earlier and who is now also charged with smuggling on three counts.

For his act, this police officer with a gross monthly pay of P28,000 has earned the praises not only of his superiors but of his colleagues.

COP COULD NOT/ A17

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/04/07/06

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

52% want Comelec execs to quit

Poll says sentiment nationwide

MAJORITY OF FILipinos or 52 percent favor the resignation of Commission on Elections commissioners as a result of the still unresolved controversies surrounding the conduct of the May 2004 elections, according to the latest Pulse Asia survey.

This sentiment was shared by Filipinos across geographic areas and socioeconomic classes. But the sentiment was strongest in the National Capital Region (60 percent) and in Class ABC (56 percent).

Only 31 percent think the Comelec commissioners should not resign while 31 percent are undecided, the survey said.

'Garci tapes'

In June 2005, tapes containing the alleged wiretapped conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and then Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano leaked out, plunging the President into the worst political crisis of her presidency.

Garcillano is now facing charges of perjury, falsification of public document and violation of the Passport Act filed by several lawmakers, after a top official of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said that one of the passports Garcillano submitted to the Joint House inquiry on the "Hello Garci" scandal was fake.

The BSP prints the passports and supplies them to the Department of Foreign Affairs which then issues the passports to applicants.

Poll irregularities

Earlier this month, Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra testified before the Senate committee hearing on the wiretapped conversations that the 2004 polls were "marred by irregularities."

The survey also found that opinions are split on whether national and local elective officials should be given a five-year tenure in office, with 52 percent favoring the proposal and 48 percent rejecting it. The same pattern was observed across geographic areas and socioeconomic classes.

Retain term limits

Meanwhile, two out of three Filipinos (62 percent) are opposed to proposals to lift the term limits for elected public officials.

From 59 to 65 percent of Filipinos across geographic areas and socioeconomic classes would reject any constitutional amendment that will allow elected officials to run as many times as they wish, the survey also showed.

The Pulse Asia survey was conducted from Feb. 18 to March 4 using face-to-face interviews of 1,200 adults 18 years old and above using multistage probability sampling with ±3 percent error margin. *Kate Pedroso, PDI Research*

GMA appoints Sarmiento Comelec commissioner

RENE SARMIENTO

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo has filled one of three vacant seats in the Commission on Elections, announcing the appointment of human rights lawyer Rene Sarmiento as the newest Comelec commissioner.

The appointment of the 52-year-old Sarmiento, the deputy presidential adviser on the peace process for the past 12 months, came just days after former Supreme Court Justice Hilario Davide recommended that the President immediately fill up the vacancies in the scandal-tainted electoral body.

Sarmiento replaces Rufino S. B. Javier who has just wound up his seven-year term at the Comelec.

This leaves two more vacancies to be filled after Mehol K. Sadain retired and Manuel Barcelona was bypassed by the congressional Commission on Appointments.

Davide became presidential adviser on electoral reform after his retirement late last year. He said the President needed to immediately fill up the vacancies so the process of rebuilding the Comelec could start. The poll body has been damaged by the "Hello Garci" tape scandal, in the midst of which the President admitted to having talked to an election commissioner in the middle of the canvassing of the 2004 election results.

Sarmiento was a member of the 1986 Constitutional Commission which drafted the 1987 Constitution and has served as consultant and member of the Presidential Human Rights Committee.

He has been extensively involved in the peace process. He was on the government panel during peace negotiations with the communist-led National Democratic Front during the Ramos administration in 1996.

He was also involved in peace talks under the Estrada and Arroyo administrations. Last year, Ms Arroyo appointed him officer-in-charge of the Office of the Presidential Assistant on the Peace Process. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

US scores RP on rights violations

By Volt Contreras

AFTER A SCATHING NEW YORK Times editorial warned that Philippine democracy may be in danger under President Macapagal-Arroyo, now comes a US state department report citing "serious problems" the country have in upholding human rights.

The report which was submitted to the US Congress noted that while the Philippine government generally respected the human rights of its citizens, there were serious problems in some areas.

"Some elements of the security forces were allegedly responsible for extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture, and arbitrary arrest and detention. The physical abuse of suspects and detainees remained a problem, as did police, prosecutorial, and judicial corruption," it noted.

The annual report titled "Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The US Record 2005 - 2006" was posted by the US Embassy on its website yesterday.

It basically updated US lawmakers on the various efforts by their government to promote democracy and respect for human rights worldwide. These efforts have "resulted in positive change in 95 countries," the report said.

The report did not cite specific cases of abuse in the Philippines, but it covered the period that saw the Arroyo administration employing strong-arm measures against critics and the press to suppress ouster calls stirred by the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal.

The report only made brief mention of Ms Arroyo's political crisis in a portion explaining the US-sponsored education program for selected officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"During the political turbulence in 2005, (the AFP's) senior leaders remained neutral and staunchly supported constitutional processes and civilian control over the military," it recalled.

In the Philippines, the report said, the US rights campaign focused on the police and military, the judiciary, civil society, women migrant workers, people with disabilities, and Muslims who "historically have been victims of societal prejudice by the Christian majority."

The US government, for example, sent some 150 members of the Philippine National Police and other law enforcement officials to the International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok for courses with human rights, ethics, rule of law and anticorruption components.

The US also organized numerous public conferences and gatherings throughout the year to promote interfaith dialogue among Filipino Muslims and Christians.

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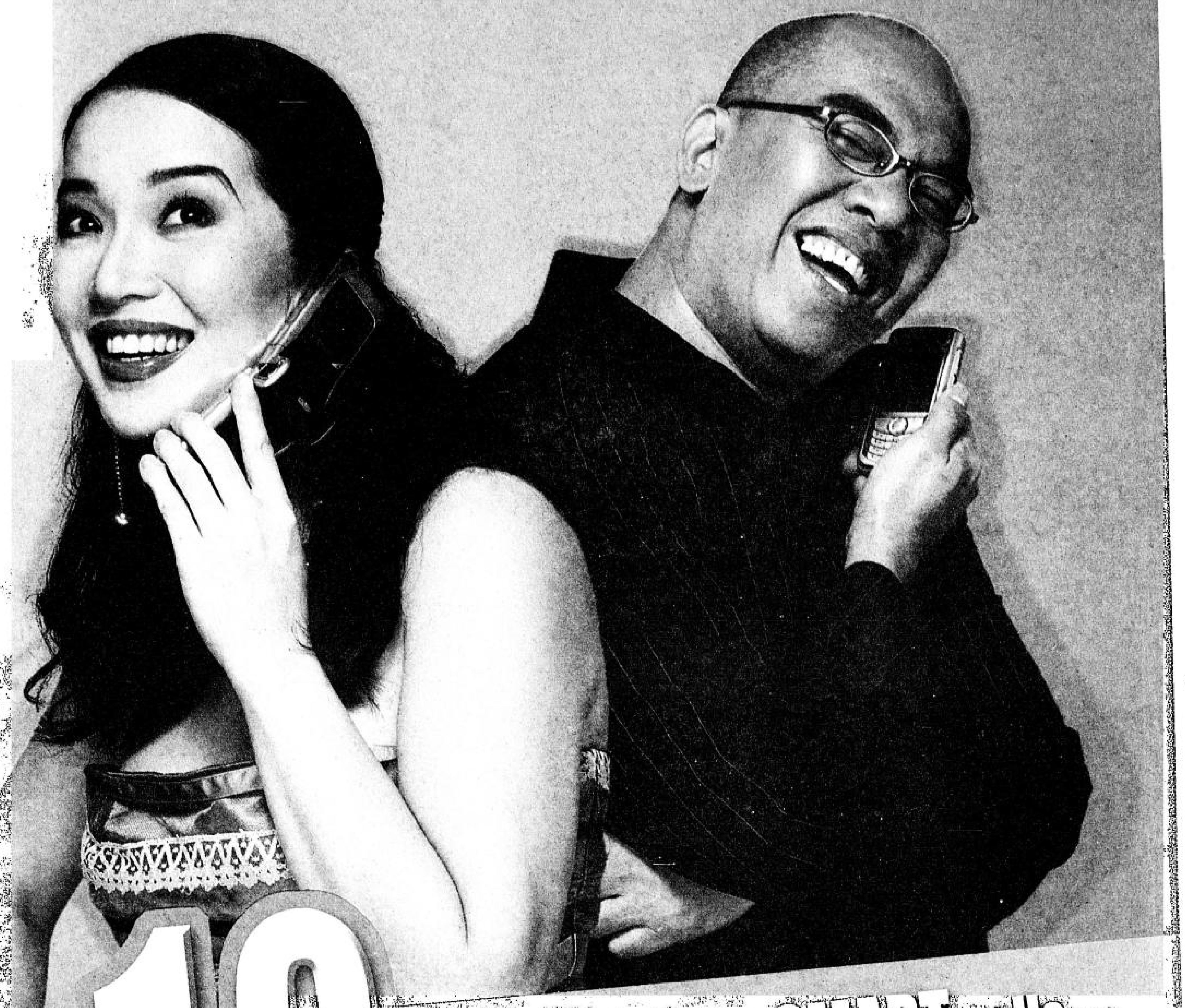

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Anabelle Jara
Las Piñas City

9-Mar
Rowena Tarongoy
Midsayap, Cotabato
Wilfredo Merino
Quezon City
Marivic Caltura
Las Piñas City
Paul Arellano
Valenzuela City
Pedro Vallado
Mangaldan, Pangasinan
Jeanette Bea
Quezon City
Marilou L. Tan
Zamboanga Del Sur
Gemma Tumandoc
Las Piñas City
Aileen Vasquez
San Luis, Antipolo City
Adonis Marcella
Pasay City
10-Mar
Benedick Castillo
Laur, Nueva Ecija
Recel Vinoya
Puerto Princesa City, Palawan
Mae Legados
San Vicente, Panabo City
Jovita S Ramos
Tondo, Manila
Shawnn Kristoffer Ongyiu
Langihan Road, Butuan City
Lorena Lagsila
Quezon City
Felix Mar Op. Andaya
Tayug, Pangasinan
Ruben G. Apostol Jr.
Davao Oriental
Jorge Ballsi
Pasay City
Ronnie Sanchez
Pampanga

11-Mar
Rhealoy Bacull
Sta. Cruz
Arnulfo R. Ramoya Jr.
Valenzuela City
Josephine A. Gonzales
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Joan C. Llabore
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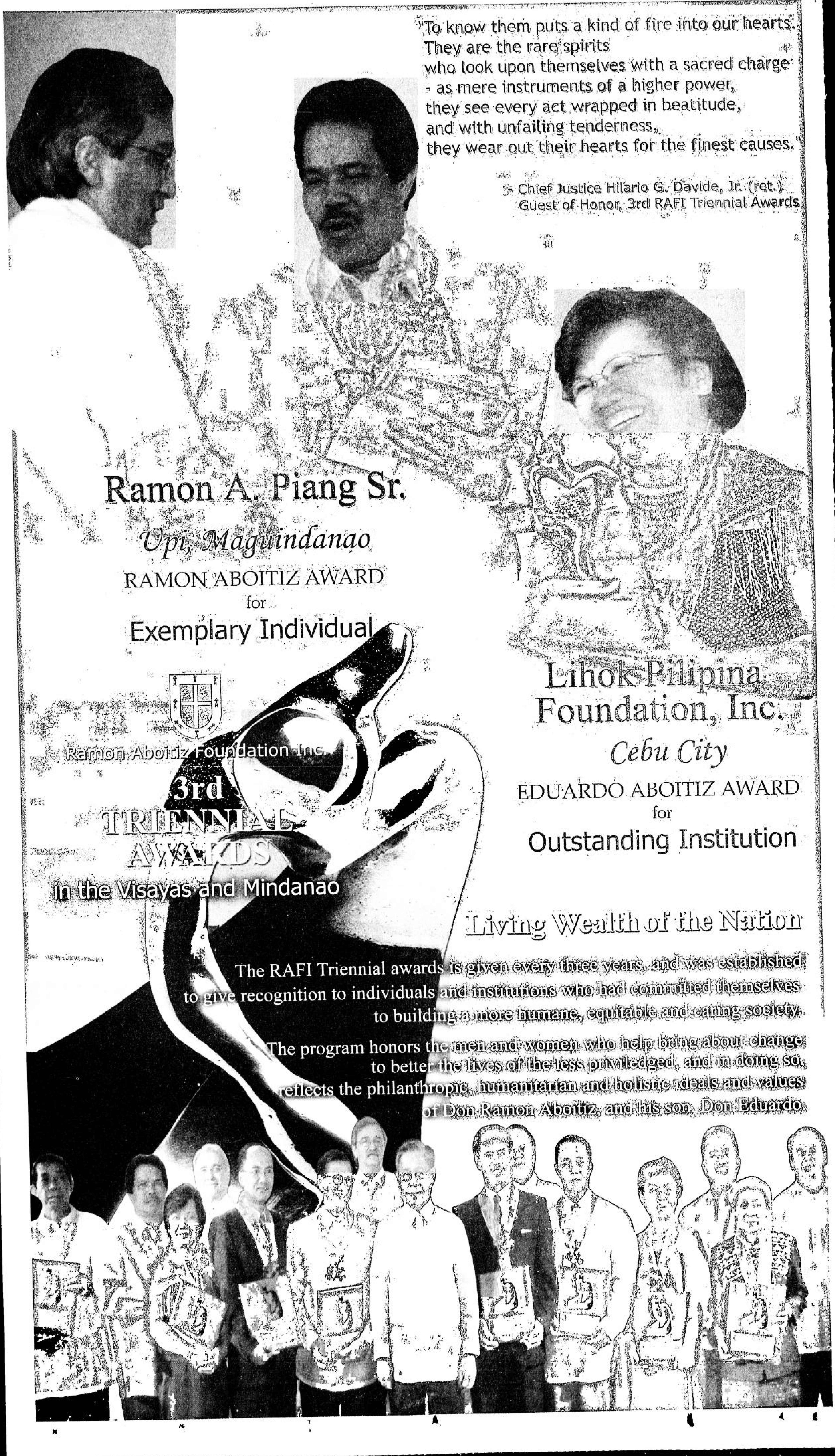

> "To know them puts a kind of fire into our hearts.
> They are the rare spirits
> who look upon themselves with a sacred charge
> - as mere instruments of a higher power,
> they see every act wrapped in beatitude,
> and with unfailing tenderness,
> they wear out their hearts for the finest causes."
>
> – Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide, Jr. (ret.)
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Call centers to help wean RP away from OFW dollars

From page A1

in infrastructure, knowing how the country's shortcomings here may well turn off investors, said Dennis Arroyo, the Neda's director for policy planning and research.

"We'll slowly be replacing [earnings from] OFWs with BPOs [business process outsourcing] over the medium term," said Arroyo, in reaction to a cautionary report on the Philippine economy from the Asian Development Bank.

The ADB, in its annual Asian Development Outlook released on Thursday, warned that sluggish investments along with high dependence on consumption and overseas workers' remittances were stunting the Philippines' growth prospects.

Only 5% growth in '06

The regional bank's report predicted that Philippine gross domestic product would rise by only 5 percent this year against the government's down-scaled growth target of 5.5 to 6.2 percent and the 5.1 percent growth posted in 2005.

The ADB lamented that the country's growth performance was falling short of what was required to make "significant inroads into persistent high levels of poverty and unemployment."

Arroyo said the government was confident that the country could post a GDP growth of at least 5.5 percent this year.

"This growth target is even conservative given that we've had strong growth in the services sector led by telecommunications and the BPO/call center business," Arroyo said.

He said the telecom sector would remain competitive with the advent of the VOIP (voice over Internet protocol), which allows users to make long distance calls using the Internet, and even 3G technology which allows real-time video broadcasting through the mobile phone.

Arroyo said OFW inflows would remain strong as it would be driven by the global aging phenomenon which would boost demand for migrant workers in industrialized countries.

By 2009 to 2010, the lucrative BPO sector would become even bigger, allowing the country to earn more foreign exchange without more Filipinos having to join the worker exodus abroad, Arroyo said.

Cost of migration

The ADB report warned that the high level of out-migration, though it generates high-remittance income, comes at a high cost to the country in terms of loss of knowledge and social problems.

Aside from call centers, Arroyo said the BPO sector would be boosted by other services such as medical and legal transcription, animation and software development.

The services sector, of which BPO is part, now accounts for about 48 percent of the country's domestic output, edging out agriculture and industry which respectively contribute 19 percent and 33 percent of GDP in 2005.

Arroyo also noted that OFW remittances were being directed into the stock market and even real estate.

"OFWs are looking more into investing in blue chips, especially now that the stock market is trading at a seven-year high," Arroyo said.

Shift to real estate

He said the shift of OFW money from pre-need plans to real estate would help the construction sector.

Cash remittances sent by OFWs through the banking system amounted to $10.7 billion in 2005, 25 percent higher than the previous year, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

If inflows through informal channels were to be included, OFW remittances were estimated at about $13 billion in 2005.

To address infrastructure bottlenecks, Arroyo said the government was committed to devoting a bigger portion of the annual budget to infrastructure spending.

"Now that we've implemented the VAT (value-added tax) reform, we have more resources for capital outlays," he said.

Enhance highway systems

A major priority is to enhance the highway systems connecting the three major economic growth areas of Luzon—the National Capital Region, the Clark-Subic development area and the Calabarzon (Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon) growth corridor—whose combined output accounts for 55 percent of the country's GDP.

Based on Neda estimates, the Philippines needs P1.1 trillion ($21.25 billion) in fresh investments from 2006 to 2010 to ease the gaps in transportation, power, water, communications and social infrastructure in the next five years.

According to Arroyo, the thrust is to encourage the private sector to undertake those projects "with positive financial and economic returns" while the government focuses on "essential projects with high economic returns despite poor financial viability."

Fiscal discipline

But to maintain fiscal discipline, the government will focus on projects that will not burden it with contingent liability and encourage the participation of local government units whenever feasible.

Of the amount required for infrastructure spending over the next five years, the national government is expected to shell out P171.56 billion from its budget and another P108.98 billion outside the budget (such as those involving LGUs), on top of its contribution to joint venture projects with the private sector.

Projects involving public-private partnership, or the build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme, are expected to amount to nearly P500 billion.

Arroyo said partial liberalization of air transportation in key areas as well as further improvements in the nautical highway system through the ro-ro (roll on, roll off) mode, would also boost the investment climate.

Ruffa, parents face raps for tax evasion

From page A1

motion of talents—and its owners committed the following violations :

- Unlawful pursuit of business. Royal Era was allegedly registered with the BIR only in 1998 when its operations started in 1996.
- Failure to file its corporate annual and quarterly income tax returns from 1998 to 2002 despite having produced several movies and concerts.
- Underdeclaration of income derived from millions of pesos in commissions received from GMA Network Inc. in its income tax returns by 40 percent in 2003 and 222 percent in 2004
- Failure to update its registration as an entity subject to value-added tax and failure to file the requisite VAT returns and pay its VAT dues.

Repeated requests

Buñag said a Letter of Authority was issued against the company for examination of its books of accounts and other accounting records for the questioned years.

Despite repeated requests, the company, however, failed to present its records.

Among the concerts produced by the company which the BIR was able to verify were: "Songs and Laughter Unlimited (Dec. 7 and 8, 2001)," "The Way We Are (Oct. 26 and 27, 2001)," "One Night Stand Date (Oct. 25 and 26,2002)," "Ara in a One Night Stand with Hajji (Oct. 26, 2002)" and "A Very Wholesome Show" (Oct. 25, 2002).

The company also produced several movies from 1998 to 2002, namely "Babae sa Cake" (1998), "Mga Liham ni Alberto" (1998), "Babae sa Dilim" (1999) and "She Wants to be a Millionaire" (2001).

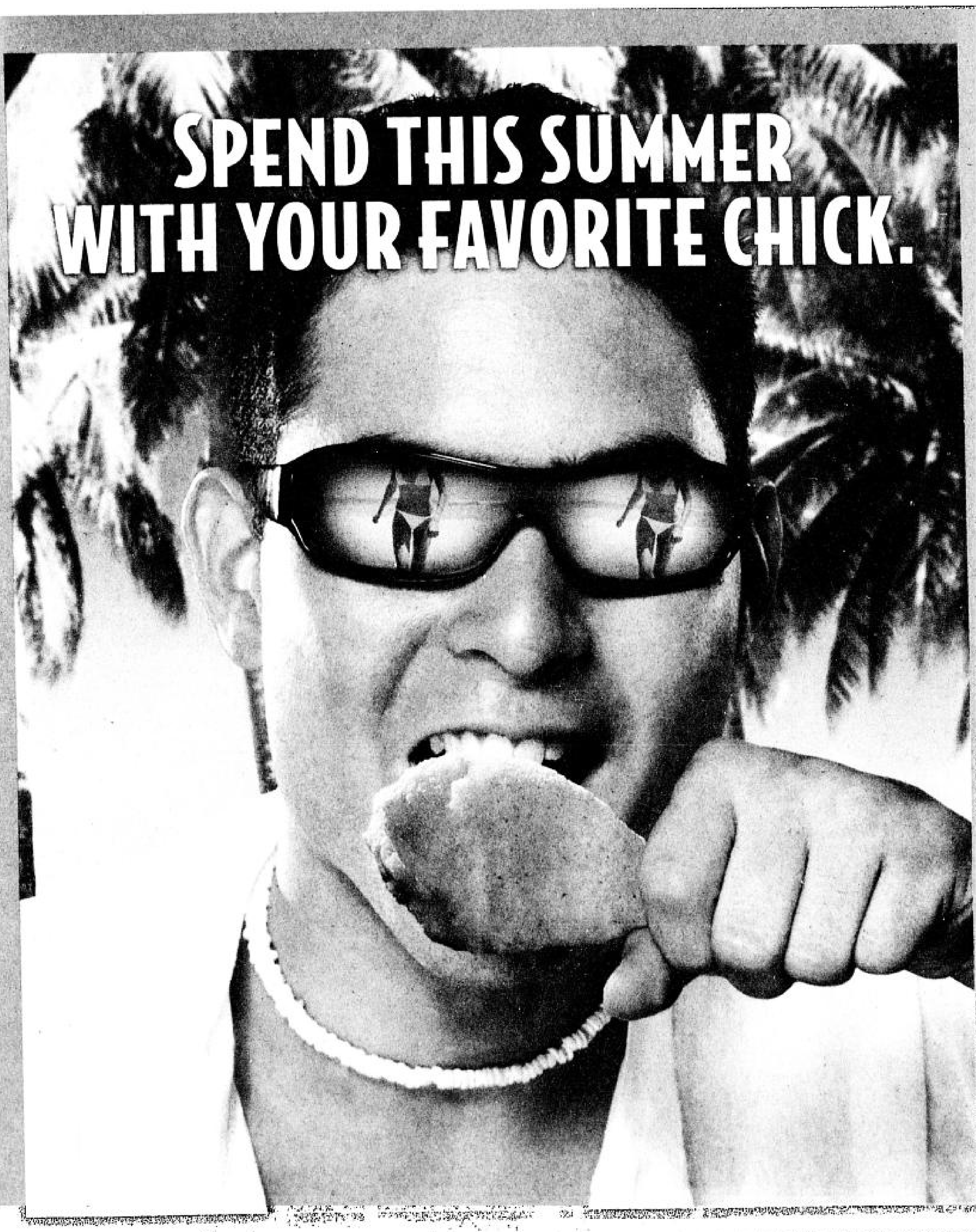
Delivering message

Buñag said it was clear that the repeated fraudulent and culpable acts of Royal Era were carried out by its owners knowing full well of the fraud intended to be committed against the government.

He also said the Gutierrezes purposely registered their business entity as a non-VAT percentage tax type of business despite knowledge that it should have updated its business registration from non-VAT to VAT.

"It is not the amount of tax deficiency that matters but it is the message that we want to strongly deliver. The RATE program will not rest on its laurels. It will always be up on its feet running after tax evaders, whoever they are," Buñag said.

Other high-profile personalities who had been charged with tax evasion were singer Regine Velasquez, actor Richard Gomez, actress Judy Ann Santos and former Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.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Even the dead got fertilizers, COA reports

From page A1

were not residents of the municipality.

Also in the Ilocos, out of 1,332 names in the list of farmers-beneficiaries, 38 were listed twice while two barangay chairs signed confirmations but could not recall the number of bottles they received.

The documents also showed "blatant falsifications," according to COA.

"There were instances when intended beneficiaries were not identified at the outset and neither was any list of recipients attached to provide a mechanism for verification," it said.

Random sampling

The COA auditors conducted random sampling in three regions—Ilocos, Central Visayas and Northern Mindanao. They discovered that 42 percent of the 4,437 bottles of fertilizers for distribution in these regions "were not received either by the farmers themselves or by the barangay chairmen."

There were 1,841 bottles of fertilizer worth P2.72 million that did not reach their recipients, the report said.

In both Ilocos and Northern Mindanao regions, it was found that some of the beneficiaries only received their fertilizers in November 2005 although the funds for their purchase were provided in 2004.

The report noted that the implementors of the GMA program did not coordinate with the city and municipal agriculture offices (MAOs) and barangay chairs, which they needed to do "to identify qualified beneficiaries."

This was apparently not provided for in the memorandums of agreement that the DA's regional field units signed with the local government units or the NGOs for the distribution of the farm inputs.

Dubious NGOs

The auditors found that some of the 13 NGOS that received funding were of "dubious legitimacy."

"Of the 13 NGOs, only five were holding offices in their addresses of record in Metro Manila, five NGOs and one supplier could not be located, and four NGOs had no certificates of registration filed with the (SEC)," the report said.

The four NGOs without SEC registration papers were: the National Organization for Agricultural Enhancement and Productivity (it received P27 million from the DA, not including the fertilizer funds given by LGUs); the Ikaw at Ako Foundation of Barangay Binanuan, Talisay, Camarines Norte (P8 million); the Kabus nga Mag-uuma ug Mangat Foundation in Cebu City (P5 million); and The Workers' Cooperative of the Philippines in General Santos City (P5 million).

The report said the following NGOs could not be found in the addresses they gave: the Gabaymasa Development Foundation in Quezon City (P32 million); the Las Marias Foundation (P5 million) in Caloocan and Quezon City; Sikap Yaman Foundation (P4.9 million); the Philippine Environment and Ecological Development Association (P1.95 million); and the Bukid Tanglaw Livelihood Foundation (P10 million).

These same NGOs also disregarded the requirement of conducting a public bidding for the purchase of fertilizers, the COA said.

Exclusive distributors

"Not being government entities, they were not bound by the procurement reform law despite the fact that they were spending public funds," the report said.

It said a canvass of the prices of the foliar fertilizers that the NGOS bought "disclosed that the other brands of foliar fertilizer were available in the market and sold at lower prices than those paid by NGOs/POs."

"This availability only proved that foliar fertilizer was a common item and that it was readily available in the market so that awards of purchase contracts through negotiation with so-called exclusive distributors was not justified," the report said.

The Philippine Social Development Foundation, which received P28 million, bought P5 million worth of fertilizers in Misamis Occidental and distributed these "without [a] list of beneficiaries."

The auditors found 169 vouchers for disbursements, amounting to P487 million, that were approved by regional executive directors and DA regional field unit signing officers "despite the fact that the individual amounts disbursed exceeded their signing authority."

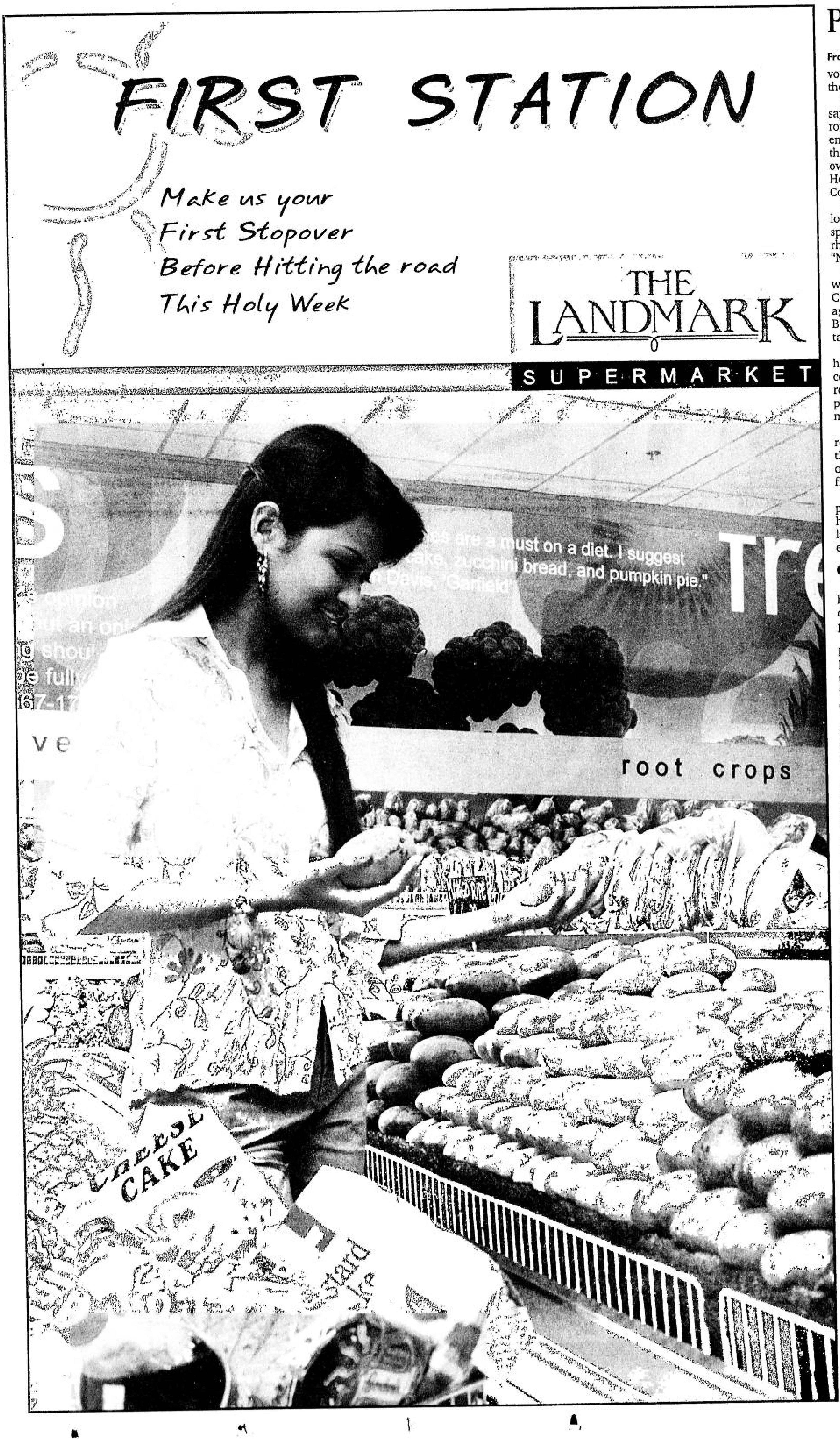
Split payments

"Some 149 check payments totaling P116 million appeared to be split in order to keep the amounts within their signing authority, thereby avoiding action by a higher authority," it added.

The COA report also found that the DA regional field unit in Southern Tagalog bought 14 units of fabricated mechanical equipment for P14 million "without the benefit of public bidding." It noted that these were not classified as farm implements under the GMA program.

Six of the 14 units were found to have been overpriced by P2.75 million.

"While all 14 units were found during field visits, only eight were operational," the report said.



Prosecutor ...

From page A1

voice seemed to evoke the oppressive heat of the room.

"We do not care about what the President says, specifically President Macapagal-Arroyo," Velasco said in a voice raised to an emotional pitch. "We do not care about what the Secretary of Justice says ... We have our own minds. We do not depend on them, your Honor. We depend on our principles and the Constitution."

Presiding Judge Jenny Lind Aldecoa-Delorino raised grunts of amusement when, responding to Velasco's seemingly inspired rhetoric, she said casually and with a smile: "Noted."

Velasco's courtroom outburst yesterday was triggered by chief defense lawyer Romeo Capulong's claim that the rebellion charge against his client, Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran, was a "bogus" case filed upon the dictates of Malacañang.

"He (Beltran) was detained and charged haphazardly through scripted inquest proceedings," said Capulong. He accused Ms Arroyo and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez of prejudging the case, based on their statements to media.

"We do not care what the President or Secretary Gonzalez says," said Velasco, denying the prosecutors were following a script. "We only look at evidence. If there's evidence, we file a case."

Velasco, head of Task Force Rebellion composed of public prosecutors and organized at the height of terror bomb attacks around the country last year, said his team had filed cases against even people belonging to the administration.

Oratory and laughter

Since Beltran's arrest last month, Capulong has filed several motions questioning the indictment against his client and accusing the prosecution panel of rushing its case.

Among others, the defense has asked the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 137 to release the 73-year-old defendant and dismiss the charges against him, or order his transfer to a private hospital better equipped to handle his medical needs.

But the prosecutor's fiery delivery was doused by laughter from the audience of about 30 people, most of whom were Beltran's supporters.

It was Velasco who prosecuted and secured death sentences for two confessed Abu Sayyaf members and an Indonesian terror suspect over the Feb. 14, 2005 bombing in Makati City, which killed four people.

Power of superiors

Capulong was unimpressed by Velasco's arguments.

"I hope that is true, but unfortunately their actions belie what they said in court," Capulong told reporters.

"The career of public prosecutors depends a lot upon their superior and the incumbent President. If those are the pronouncements of their superiors, can you expect these young career people to do otherwise? Can I believe that these were not personally handpicked by Gonzalez to railroad the filing of these charges?" said Capulong.

Beltran has been detained since March 2 at the Philippine National Police General Hospital. He and rebel soldier 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan are accused of plotting with communists to overthrow the administration.

The judge gave both parties until Wednesday to file their additional evidence or comments on pending motions.

Corrections

IN THE APRIL 1 issue, a letter to the editor on Page A14 of the Opinion section—"Missing out on the best president"—misstated that Arturo T. Valdez was a former transportation and communication secretary. He was a former undersecretary of the department.

***

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, an article on Page A13—"Customs, DOF rethink revamp"—misstated the day Bureau of Customs officer in charge Alexander Arevalo received the order to direct the reshuffled officials to return to their former posts. Arevalo received the order on Monday, April 3—not Friday, March 31.

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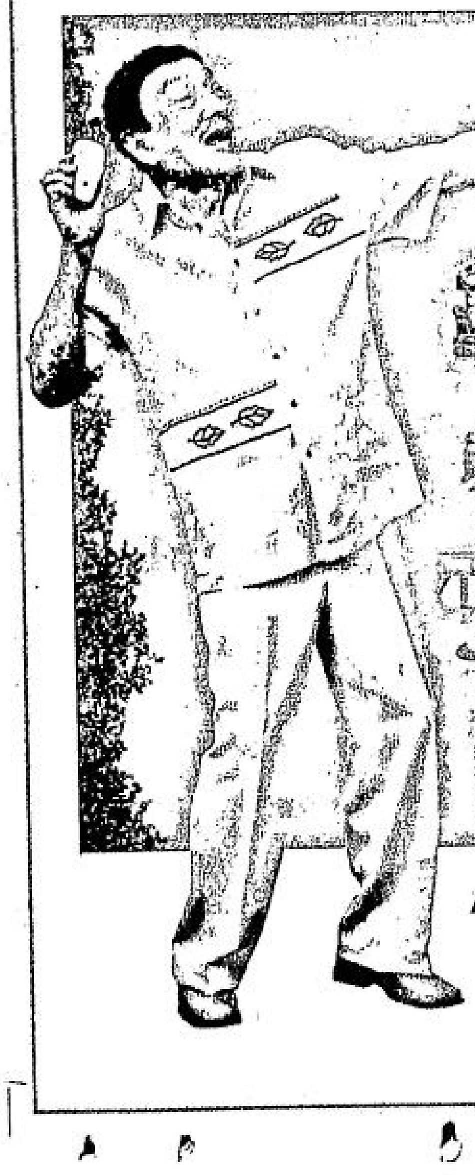

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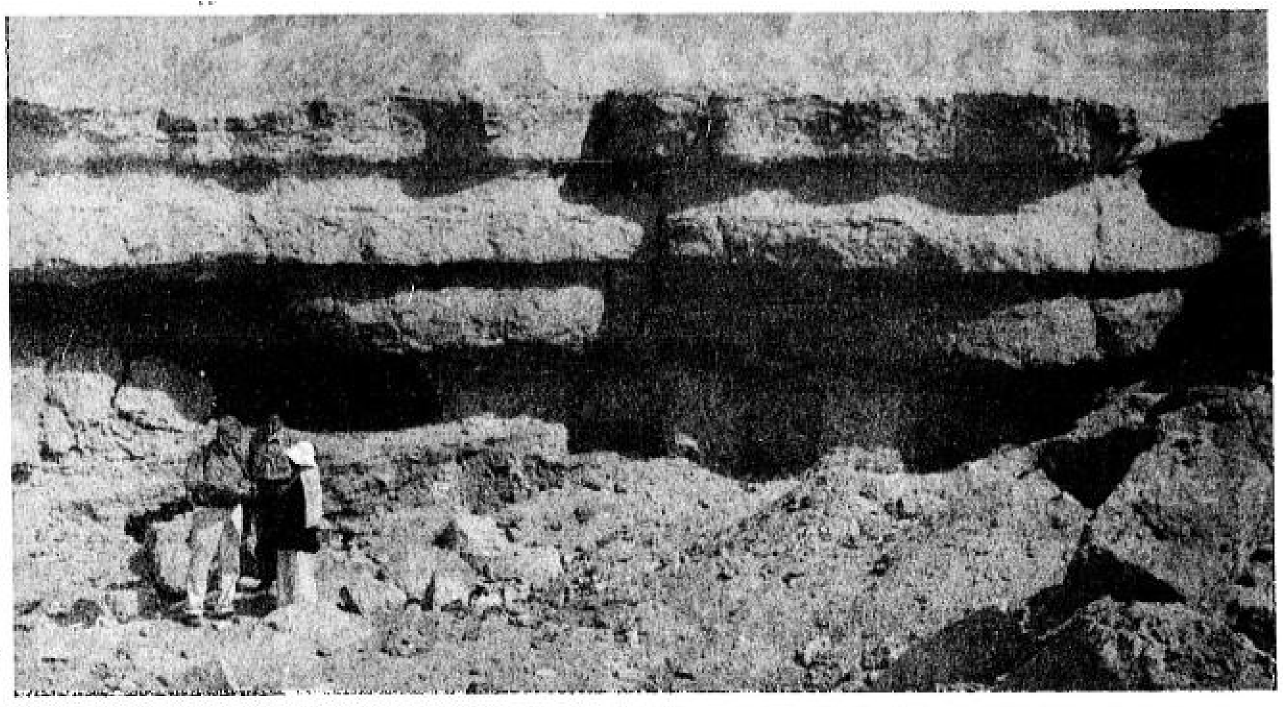

WHERE THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS WAS FOUND: Photograph released by the National Geographic Magazine on Thursday shows caves north and east of El Minya, Egypt. The manuscript is now on exhibit in Washington, DC. AFP/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Judas was no villain, ancient document claims

From page A1

the gospel tradition?" Senior said.

It is not known who wrote the Judas gospel. The copy unveiled on Thursday was a document mentioned critically in the year 180 in a treatise called "Against Heresies," written by Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon in what was then Roman Gaul and now France.

The bishop denounced the manuscript as heresy because it differed from mainstream Christianity. The actual text had been thought lost until this discovery.

Elaine Pagels, a professor of religion at Princeton University, said, "The people who loved, circulated and wrote down these gospels did not think they were heretics."

Let the debates begin

Added Senior: "Let a vigorous debate on the significance of this fascinating ancient text begin."

In the Bible's New Testament, Judas is portrayed as the quintessential traitor, accepting 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus by identifying him to Roman soldiers. The biblical Gospel of St. Matthew says Judas quickly regretted his treachery, returned the silver and hanged himself.

The New Testament contains four Gospels—of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—but many more so-called apocryphal gospels were written in the first centuries after Christ's death, attributed to such disciples as Thomas and Philip and to his female follower Mary Magdalene.

Hidden in desert

Ehrman, Senior and other experts on Christianity spoke at a briefing at the National Geographic Society, which unveiled a translation of the Judas gospel and which helped authenticate, preserve and translate the document.

The leather-bound copy of the gospel was written in Coptic script on both sides of 13 sheets of papyrus, and spent most of the past 1,700 years hidden in a cavern in the Egyptian desert, said Terry Garcia of the National Geographic Society.

This document was probably copied from the original Greek manuscript around the year 300, Garcia said. Discovered in the 1970s near Minya, Egypt, the volume—including the gospel and other documents—was sold to an Egyptian antiquities dealer in 1978.

Crumbled into 1,000 pieces

The dealer offered it for sale without success, and eventually locked it in a bank safe deposit box in Hicksville, New York, for 16 years, which hastened its decay.

In images displayed at the briefing, the papyrus looked like brown, dry autumn leaves.

Garcia said it had crumbled into more than 1,000 pieces.

In 2000, it was bought by a Zurich-based antiquities dealer Frieda Nussberger-Techacos. Concerned about the rapidly deteriorating condition of the manuscript, she transferred it to the Maecenas Foundation for Ancient Art in Basel, Switzerland, in February 2001 for preservation and translation.

Piecing together the fragile 26-page Gospel of Judas, written on both sides of 13 sheets of papyrus, was "one of the most complex puzzles ever devised by history," the National Geographic said.

In the next years, scientific tests—including radiocarbon dating, ink analysis and multispectral imaging—showed the document was copied down around 300.

The Judas gospel is being published in book form by National Geographic and pages from the papyrus manuscript will be on display at the society's museum in Washington starting on Friday. The manuscript will ultimately be housed at the Coptic Museum in Cairo. *Reuters, AFP, AP and New York Times News Service*

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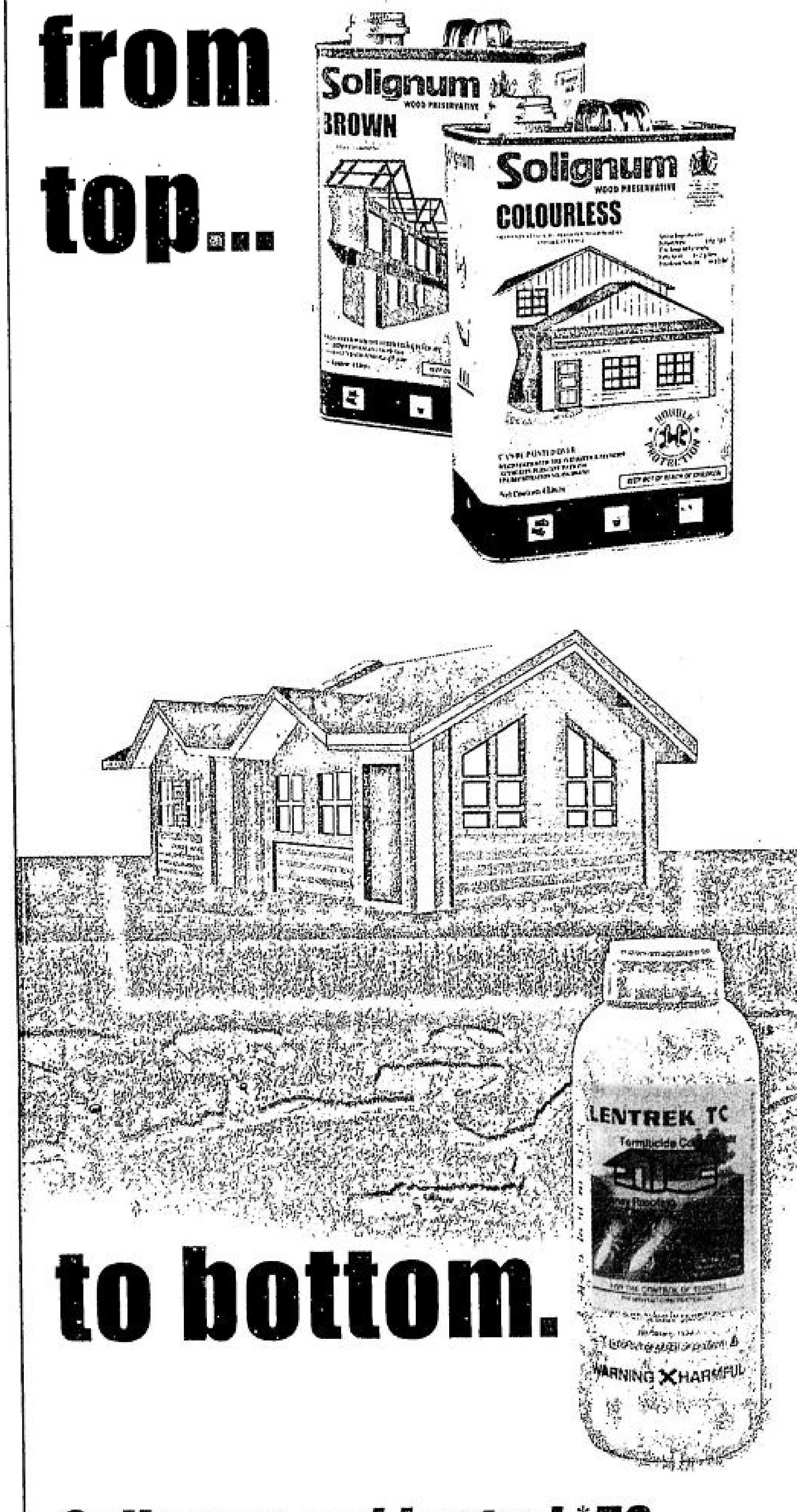

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Police nab 2 suspects in 16 kidnapping cases

By Luige A. del Puerto

VICTIMS point their fingers at two alleged members of a kidnap for ransom gang who were presented to the media in Camp Crame Friday by PNP Chief Arturo Lomibao, center. Seated at left is anti-crime advocate Teresita Ang-See. JOAN BONDOC

TWO MEN ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN AT least 16 kidnap-for-ransom cases in Metro Manila and Luzon were arrested by the police on Tuesday in Leyte.

The police nabbed Jonathan Rinos, 30, and his brother Gerardo Rinos, 43, in Javier town in Leyte on April 4 on the strength of an arrest warrant issued by a court in Bulacan for kidnapping and robbery.

Jonathan was also allegedly involved in the murder of kidnap victim Shirmon Choa in Valenzuela City in August last year.

Judge Guillermo Agloro recommended no bail for the kidnapping charge.

Two of the Rinos brothers' alleged male victims, both from the Filipino-Chinese community, yesterday showed up at the headquarters of the Presidential Anti-Crime Emergency and Response to identify the arrested suspects.

The duo's arrest earned the praises of the Filipino-Chinese community, one of the sectors most vulnerable to kidnapping in the Philippines.

Anticrime advocate Teresita Ang-See said that victims are becoming "proactive" in the campaign against KFR groups. After their ordeal, they now give leads and other crucial information to the police.

"Gradually, we are seeing victims who are now ready to ... give a face to the trauma of kidnapping," said Ang-See, head of the Citizens Action Against Crime.

For the year, the police have recorded 12 KFR cases so far.

Ang-See also praised the police for the death of Peter Sorima during a shootout on March 24 in Taytay, Rizal.

One of Sorima's alleged victims, a female Filipino-Chinese, surfaced that week to identify him as one of her abductors, according to Pacer chief Deputy Director General Oscar Calderon.

Sorima was involved in at least six KFR cases. His group was also responsible for the death of businessman Arturo Picones a few years back, according to CAAC.

Since Sorima's death on March 24, the CAAC said there had been no case of kidnapping. Kidnappers, the group said, appeared to be "lying low" after the death and arrest of several of their colleagues.

"We hope it stays that way," remarked police chief Director General Arturo Lomibao.

Lomibao yesterday announced the spot promotion of five officers and 11 of their men who shot it out with Sorima and three other kidnap suspects in Taytay, Rizal in March.

He also said the promotion of two other Pacer officers, superintendents Edgar Iglesia and Guillermo Eleazar, who are always in the front line has been approved by the Senior Officers Placement and Promotion Board.

The promotion of Iglesia and Eleazar was long due, he said. But while Ang-See commended the police, she hoped the government would pour its resources, such as the putting up of reward money, in going after criminals and not the so-called destabilizers.

"I hope the government will not waste its money ... giving rewards for (the arrest of) destabilizers. (The government should) run after the criminals first."

She noted that KFR cases peaked in February and March, when the police were busy going after alleged destabilizers out to overthrow the Arroyo regime.

Criminals always "capitalize" on issues that distract the police from their work, according to her.

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More oil firms announce cut in prices of cooking gas

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MORE OIL COMPANIES YESTERDAY ANnounced another reduction in the prices of cooking gas by P1.68 a kilo or P18.50 per 11-kilogram cylinder effective yesterday.

The price cuts, the second in a week and the sixth in the last five weeks, bring the total reductions in the price of liquefied petroleum gas to P6.72 a kilo or P73.92 per 11-kg tank, which most households use.

Petron, Total Philippines, Chevron Philippines and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum said the latest round of price cuts was meant to further reflect in the local prices the significant decrease in international contract prices of LPG.

These oil companies produce LPG and sell them under the brands Gasul, Totalgaz, Caltex LPG and Shellane, respectively.

On Thursday, independent LPG refillers and retailers belonging to the LPG Marketers Association cut their prices by the same amount, saying it was part of their group's efforts to let more consumers feel the downtrend in international market prices.

According to the Department of Energy, prices of 11-kg cylinders now retail at between P427.50 and P483 each, especially in Metro Manila.

The DOE said international contract prices for LPG have been steadily going down from a record high of $625.50 a ton in February due to the cold weather in the relatively more populated Northern Hemisphere.

Contract prices went down to $428 a ton this month, a record drop of $102 a ton from $530 in March, as winter came to a close.

Last week, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla had said consumers could expect lower prices as decreasing world prices meant a similar movement in local prices.

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Erap seeks court OK to hear birthday Mass

FORMER PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada on Thursday asked the Sandiganbayan Special Division for permission to attend a morning Mass to celebrate his 69th birthday on April 19.

Estrada, through legal counsel Rene Saguisag, said he wants to attend Mass at the St. Peter's church along Commonwealth Avenue with his supporters before he proceeds to the Sandiganbayan for his plunder trial.

The former president's birthday falls on a Wednesday, which is also the scheduled regular hearing day of his criminal cases.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio posed no objection to Estrada's request but added his approval is subject to the security assessment of the Philippine National Police.

"St. Peter's is a public place and there are security issues that must be considered," Villa-Ignacio explained.

In response, the antigraft court asked the PNP to comment on Saguisag's request.

Estrada, who is also facing perjury charges, is in his fifth year of incarceration in his sprawling rest house in Tanay, Rizal. *Nelson F. Flores*

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CRIMINAL LAW	: Justice Rodolfo Palattao : Dean Carlos Ortega : Judge Pedro Laggui : Judge Ma. Cristina Cornejo : Fiscal Danilo Formoso
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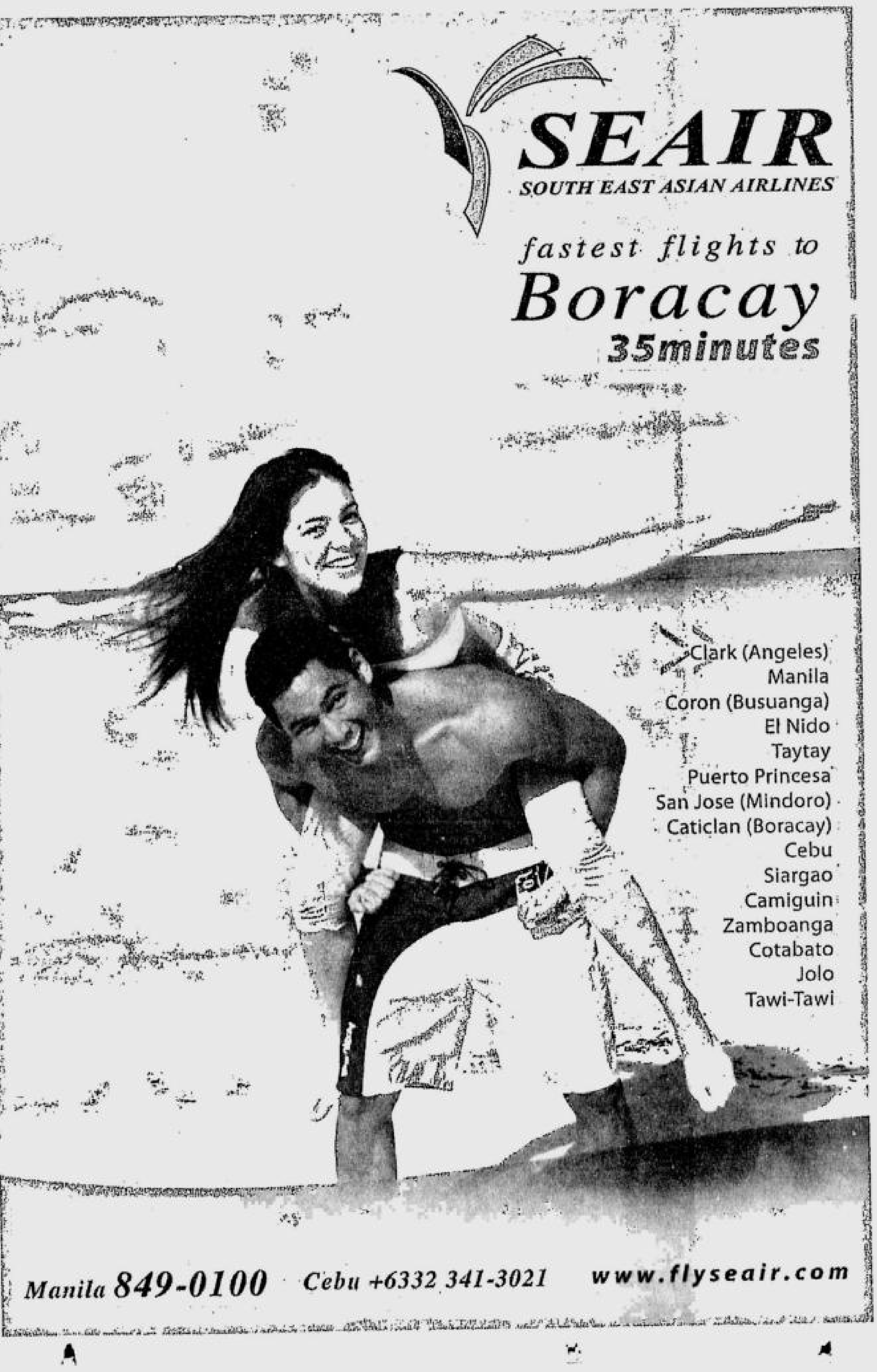


Buck-passing continues over military's Hello Garci' report

Defense chief says authors will explain

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE BUCK-PASSING OVER A REport on the military's involvement in the "Hello Garci" election fraud scandal continues.

After sitting on the report for over two months, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. passed the burden of explaining the findings back to the report's authors.

The five-man fact-finding board headed by Navy chief Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga will do the explaining if and when President Macapagal-Arroyo decides to make public the findings on the involvement of ranking officials in alleged cheating in the 2004 elections.

"The [members of the] fact-finding body will be the one to discuss that since they know its contents. They will be the ones to inform the public about the findings," Cruz told reporters recently.

Earlier, Cruz said it was up to Ms Arroyo whether the so-called Mayuga report would be made public, claiming it was a matter of "national security."

Rather than have Malacañang do it, the Mayuga board would report the outcome of the report, which according to official indications did not touch on allegations raised against some generals.

The other members of the fact-finding board were Commodore Emilio Marayag, Brig. Gen. Romeo Alamillo, Col. Caridad Aguilar and retired Maj. Gen. Raul Relano.

The investigation began late July and ended in October last year, but the report was withheld from public despite the unrest among troops over allegations that the military was used in election cheating.

Mayuga reportedly submitted his report to Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga on Jan. 20, more than two months beyond the original November deadline.

Senga passed the responsibility of releasing the report to Cruz, who received the report from Senga in late February.

Cruz had said he would forward the report to Malacañang by end of March. He submitted the report on April 5.

Among those mentioned in the "Hello Garci" wiretapped tapes were Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Southern Command chief Maj. Gen. Gabriel Habacon, retired Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko, retired Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Col. Aminkadra Salahuddin Undug.

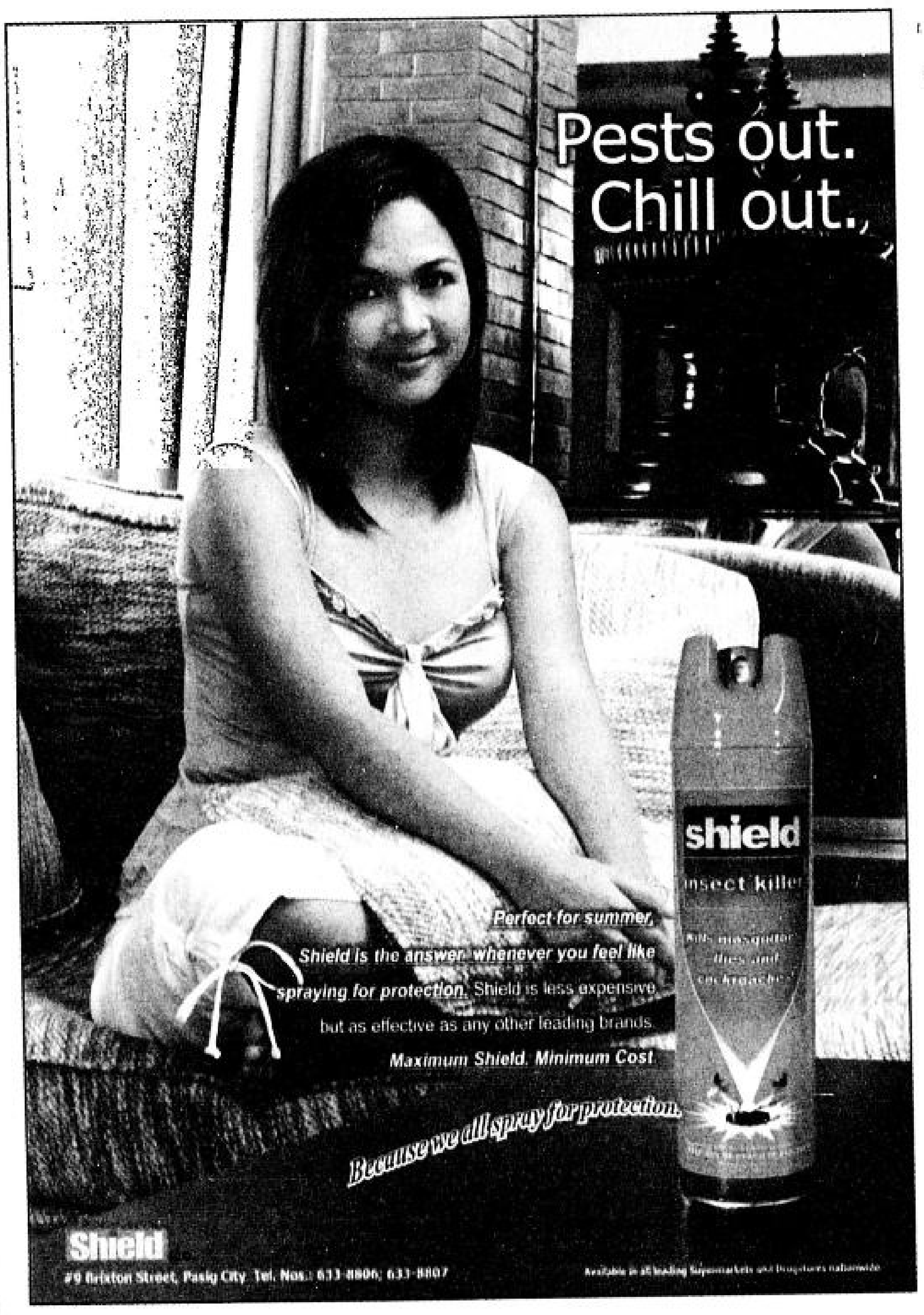
Also mentioned in the tapes were Philippine National Police chief Director Arturo Lomibao and his predecessor, Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane.

While Esperon and Habacon were promoted and Kyamko was given a position in government after retirement, Gudani was ordered court-martialed for defying a Malacañang "gag order" against testifying in a Senate inquiry into election irregularities in Lanao del Sur.

CRUZ

MAYUGA

GUDANI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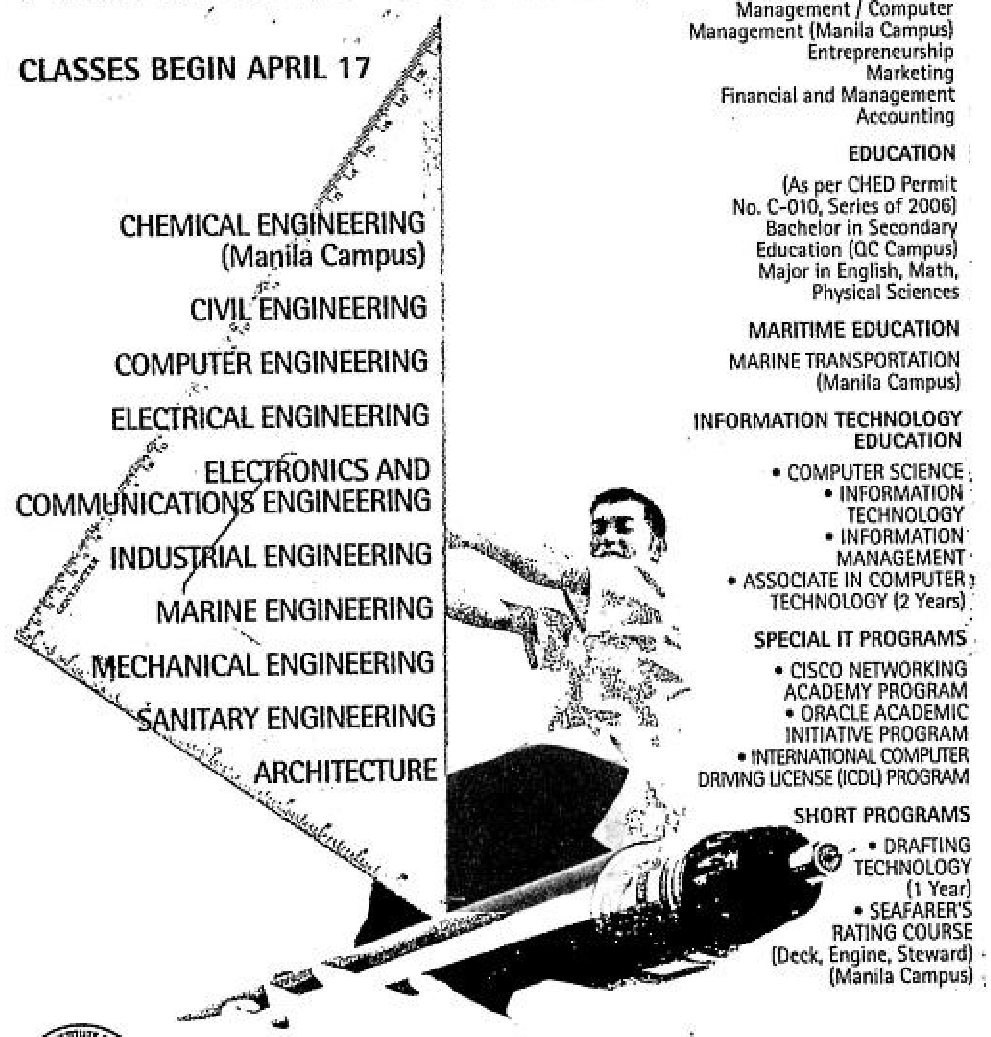
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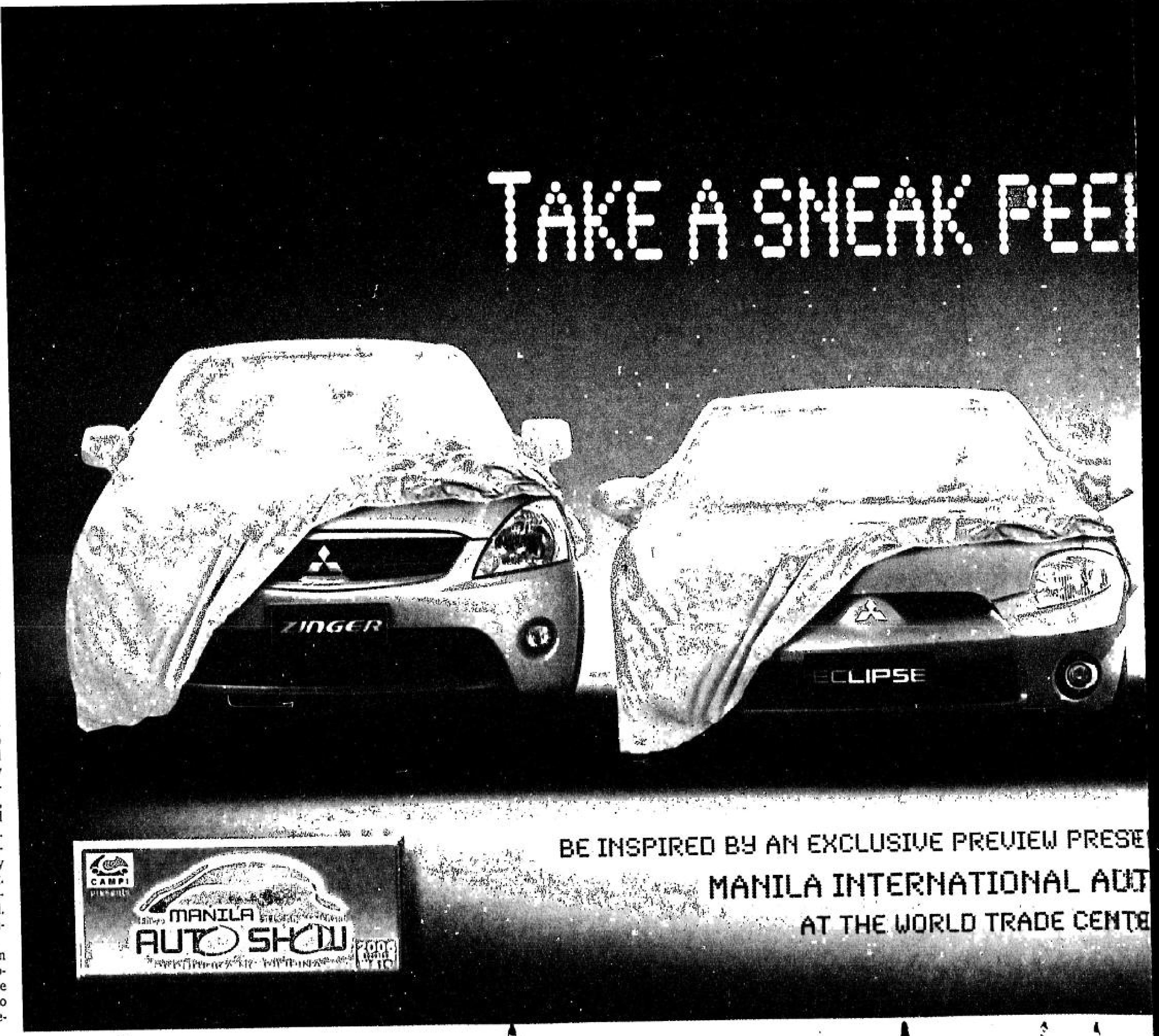
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Palace to present 'surprise witness' in new video

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACANANG WILL PRESENT A "SURPRISE witness" in a second video documentary it will release to the public next week.

BUNYE: Showing on Monday

The witness is expected to buttress the government position on the alleged conspiracy to bring down the Arroyo administration on that fateful day of Feb. 24.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye yesterday chose to be mysterious about the identity of the witness as well as to what this person would be saying, at least ahead of the release of the new Palace documentary.

Bunye told reporters it was better to watch the new 15-minute documentary on Monday when Palace officials would be holding a viewing of the video at the Palace briefing room.

The Palace had invited Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Genoroso Senga, heads of AFP major services and representatives of the Philippine National Police, to attend the viewing of the documentary.

"This second video will give more details on the intricate plot to topple this government...and we will present a surprise witness who will corroborate the earlier assertions that we made regarding this left-ring conspiracy," Bunye told reporters.

The video documentary has been titled "Sabwatan sa Kataksilan," a follow-up of the first documentary "Paglaban sa Kataksilan: 1017," which Palace officials released on March 3 when President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted the State of Emergency it had declared on Feb. 24.

The first video documentary had detailed the alleged conspiracy between elements of the right and left and their political supporters to topple the government and put in place a civilian-military junta. It also detailed the dates that these groups set in carrying about their alleged objectives.

But Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor told the INQUIRER that the surprise witness was "one of the core leaders" of the Magdalo Group, the group of young military officers who allegedly conspired with the Communist Party of the Philippines in the latest attempt to unseat President Arroyo.

All Defensor could say was that the surprise witness made "surprising revelations."

Bunye said that President Arroyo already has a copy of the new video but he did not know whether she had viewed its contents. He said he had already seen the video.

Asked why the Palace was releasing a second video, Bunye said some developments had taken place recently and the public needed to be informed about them.

He mentioned the recent capture of a conspirator to the Feb. 24 coup plot, referring to Army Capt. Dante Langkit, who was arrested last week by government agents in Quezon City.

Bunye said that authorities also seized some documents from Langkit and this "would be discussed in the video."

"There are new information that has come out and its important that we give these details out so that the public would have a wider understanding of the situation in our country," he told reporters.

Bunye said the release of the first Palace documentary had caught a "lot of interest" when it was made available in the government web sites.

Asked whether this inspired the government to release a second video, he maintained that the government just saw it important to inform and educate the public.

In a phone interview, Defensor said that the new video would "substantiate what transpired last Feb.24," including the alleged alliance of the right, left and their political supporters.

Defensor said the government was putting out another video documentary again because through "visuals" the public would better understand the situation in the country.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, April 8, 2006
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Ex 37:21-28
Gospel: John 11:45-57

Many of the Jews who had come with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw what he did; but some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees called the Sanhedrin Council.

They said, "What are we to do? For this man keeps on giving miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, all the people will believe in him and, as a result of this, the Romans will come and sweep away our Holy Place and our nation."

Then one of them, Caiaphas, who was High Priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all nor do you see clearly what you need. It is better to have one man die for the people than to let the whole nation be destroyed."

In saying this Caiaphas did not speak for himself, but being High Priest that year, he foretold as a prophet that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the scattered children of God. So, from that day on, they were determined to kill him.

Because of this, Jesus no longer moved about freely among the Jews. He withdrew instead to the country near the wilderness and stayed with his disciples in a town called Ephraim.

The Passover of the Jews was at hand and people from everywhere were coming to Jerusalem to purify themselves before the Passover. They looked for Jesus and as they stood in the Temple, they talked with one another, "What do you think? Will he come to the festival?" Meanwhile the chief priests and the elders had given orders that anyone who knew where he was should let them know so that they could arrest him.

Commentary

God tells Ezekiel that he will bring the scattered peoples back, deliver them from their sins of apostasy and all their evil and violence. He will make them a covenant of peace, make everlasting sanctuary among them, and all the nations will know that God dwells with them. This covenant is a person who is Peace, who brings us all back to communion with God and one another, who brings us back from the dead to everlasting life, known now in baptism/confirmation and eucharist in the Body of Christ. The raising of Lazarus is the image of all of us saved for life now and because of this power of life, there are those who seek to kill Jesus.

Do we stand with those who bring life or with those who decide that someone must die for the sake of the people? Clearcut and deadly. We must chose.

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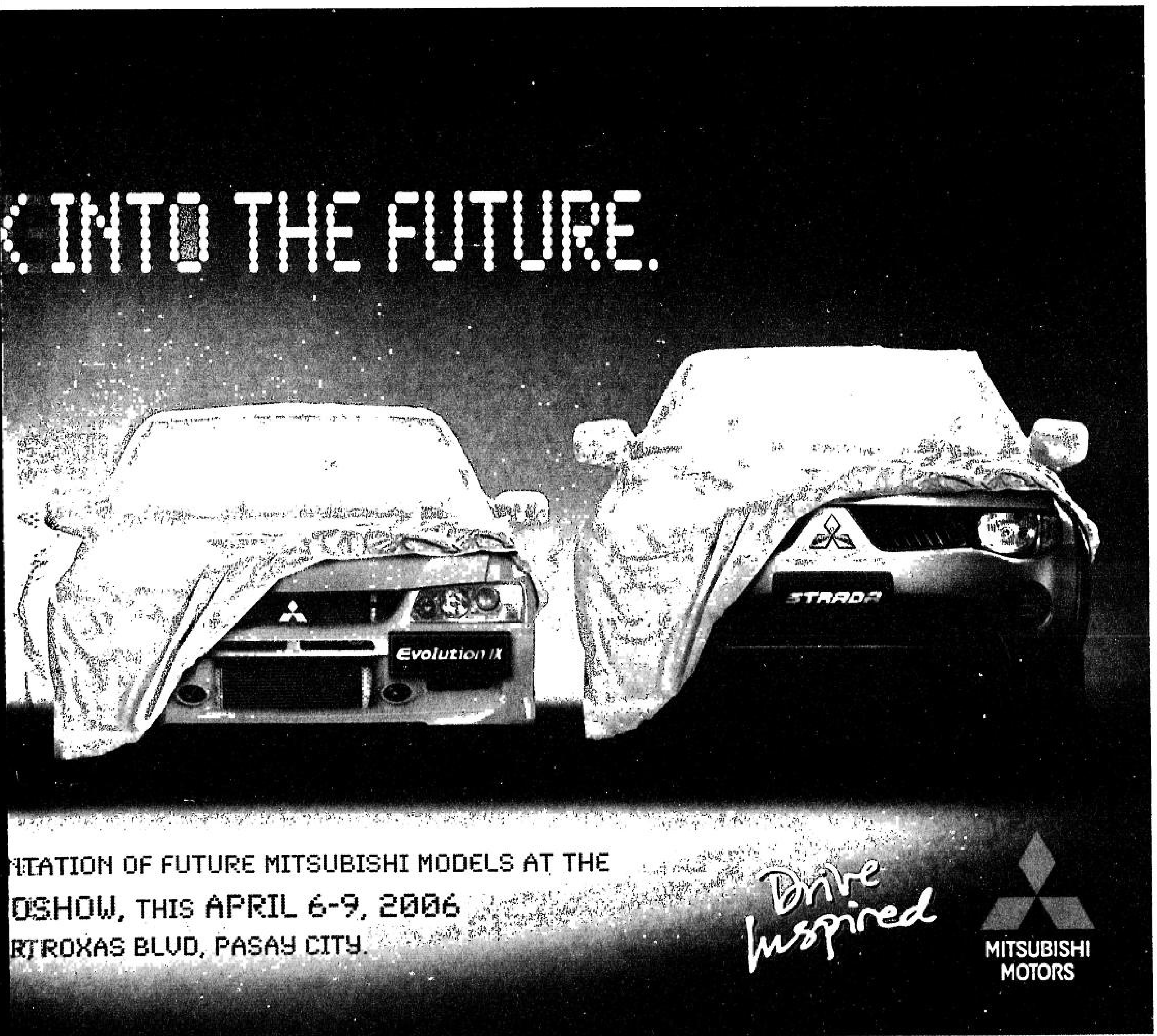

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OPINION

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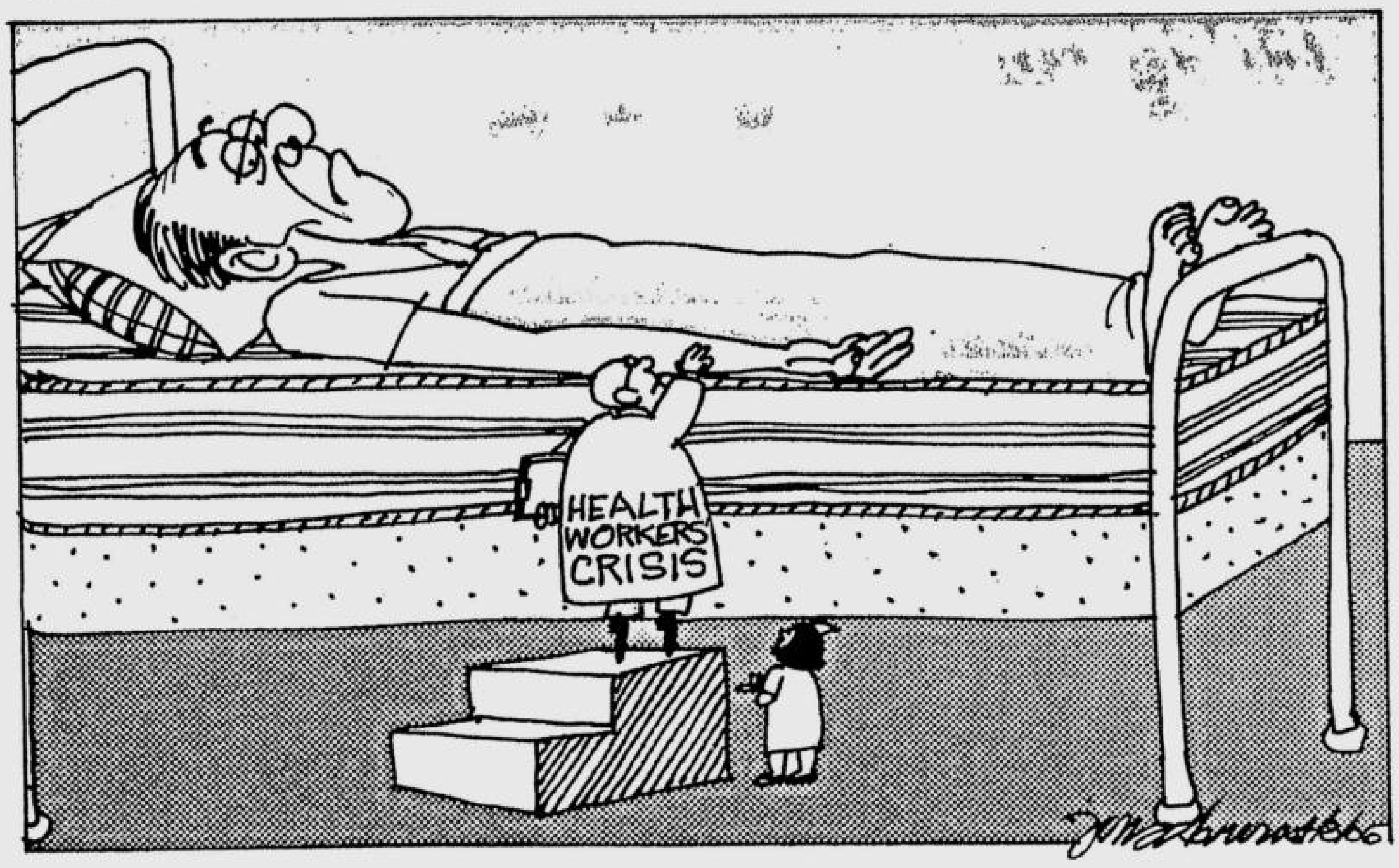

Laggard

EDITORIAL

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SPEAK OF THE strong peso and the resurgent stock market not only as if they were signal achievements but powerful engines that would propel the country to the long-awaited economic takeoff. "The strong peso represents a resurging economy," Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio was quoted as saying earlier this year. "Eventually it is the peso that will silence detractors of the government and their destructive type of politics."

Claudio should just stick to politics. Very few people with some familiarity with economics would agree that a strong peso is an unqualified blessing. In fact, several economist have been warning that the strong peso has weakened the competitiveness of Philippine exports aside from diminishing the purchasing power of families who depend on the remittances of overseas workers. And many of them have called for some form of intervention to moderate the rise of the currency.

But isn't the strong peso driving economic growth? Not at all, according to the Asian Development Bank. On the contrary, the high dependence on foreign exchange remittances and consumption, together with sluggish investments, is weighing down the Philippine economy, the ADB said in its latest "Asian Development Outlook." And whatever growth the country has achieved is not really something to crow about—not by Asian standards especially.

For this year, the ADB sees the Philippine gross domestic product growing by 5 percent—a shade slower than last year's 5.1 percent growth rate but way below the government's forecast of between 5.5 and 6.2 percent—and inching up to 5.3 percent in 2007. Such growth rates put the Philippines among the very few economic laggards of Asia, ADB senior economist Jesus Felipe has pointed out.

How badly it is lagging can be seen from a comparison with the ADB's growth forecast for the region. The bank projects Southeast Asia's GDP to expand at 5.5 percent this year, accelerating to 5.7 percent next year. On the other hand, the Asian economy as a whole will grow at a much faster rate of 7.2 percent this year and slow down somewhat to 7 percent the following year. China and India will lead the charge with growth rates of 9.5 percent and 7.8 percent, respectively, this year; and 8.8 percent and 7.8 percent the following year.

If having one of the slowest growth rates in the region already looks bad, what makes things even worse is that no takeoff is in sight. "There is no immediate prospect of a significant improvement in the growth outlook," says the ADB report. Looking a little further into the future, it predicts the growth rate to move within the range of 5 to 6 percent until the year 2010. Felipe said the Philippine economy "has only marginal scope for fiscal or monetary maneuver to support demand and growth."

In other words, there is little government can do to spur higher growth rates in the next few years. But that is not an excuse for government to do nothing. What the country needs are more investments to drive growth. "No investment, no growth," Felipe said. Further improvements in tax collection and further reductions in the budget deficit could strengthen economic stability, the ADB says. "To invigorate investment, momentum must build behind reforms."

From sick man to laggard—that's how far the country has progressed in the last few years. And that should be a sobering thought for government officials who keep boasting about how great the government fiscal reforms have been and how the peso has become stronger, and how the Philippine stock market has become the best performer in the region.

Fair share

FOREIGN COMMENT

HOW SHOULD JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES split the bill for the planned transfer of 8,000 US Marines from Okinawa Prefecture to Guam?

The transfer of the 8,000 US Marines to Guam will provide a great opportunity to reduce the burden imposed on the Okinawa Prefecture. Given this, Japan has good reason to pay its fair share of the costs of the relocation.

However, the US demand for Japan to foot 75 percent of the bill should be seen as extremely disproportionate. Tokyo has no reason to accept this one-sided demand from Washington.

Japan should not pay for the construction of facilities unrelated to the transfer of US Marines. The government should demand that the United States ... clearly state the grounds for its estimate of the relocation costs.

Yomiuri Shimbun (Tokyo)

Abolish the Comelec

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

THE PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE PRESENT Constitution, by whatever method this is done, should include the abolition of the Commission on Elections as the most vicious obstacle to the safeguarding of the ballot as the highest symbol of the democratic society.

This function was originally entrusted to the secretary of the interior, but this arrangement was deemed unsatisfactory because of his partisan identification. A statutory body was thus created to take over this responsibility, but it was also found to be unreliable because of the pressures that could be exerted on it by the political departments that had created and could abolish it.

It was, therefore, converted in 1940 into an independent constitutional commission that was thereafter retained pro forma in the 1973 Constitution and seriously re-established and improved in the Constitution of 1987.

Its record on the whole has been disgraceful rather than commendable. It has miserably failed to achieve the constitutional ideal of "free, orderly, honest, peaceful, and credible elections" for which the present Constitution had strengthened its powers.

Its lack of independence and integrity was first revealed in the case of Mabanag v. Lopez Vito, 78 Phil. 1, where the Comelec refused to examine the claimed insufficiency of the votes required for Congress to propose the Parity Amendment.

In fairness, it was sustained by the Supreme Court on the ground that the issue raised was a political question that neither the Comelec nor the Court itself should decide. Fortunately, this evasive doctrine was later reversed in the case of Tañada v. Cuenco, 100 Phil. 1101, which held that questions involving the legality, not the wisdom, of a particular act were justiciable.

In 1949, Jose P. Laurel appeared initially to have won the presidential election, only to be defeated by a torrent of votes from Lanao, where it was generally believed "the birds and the bees" had voted for Elpidio Quirino. The Comelec took no steps to investigate the apparent massive irregularity and in effect sustained it.

The elections of Quezon in 1941, Roxas in 1945, Magsaysay in 1953, Garcia in 1957 and Macapagal in 1961 were relatively clean. But the victories of Marcos in 1965 and 1969 were marred by tremendous vote-buying that the Comelec took no action to prevent and correct.

The declaration of martial law in 1972 further eroded the authority of the Comelec to protect the purity of suffrage that was ravaged with the "ratification" of the 1973 Constitution, the several plebiscites and referendum held to sanitize the Marcos abuses, and the snap election of 1985, which was the straw that broke the camel's back.

It was during the dictatorship that the Comelec sank to its lowest depths. Of special depravity was its decision against Evelio Javier, who appealed it to the Marcos Supreme Court, which deliberately sat on it to protect the respondents. The new Supreme Court unearthed and reversed it in the case of Evelio Javier v. Commission on Elections and Arturo Pacificador, 144 SCRA 194, which posthumously sustained the assassinated petitioner.

How has the Comelec comported itself since then?

Its past abuses and ineptness have caught up with it at last and its reputation, which used to be satisfactory if not exactly commendable, is now in tatters. It is now disdained as among the government agencies least deserving of the people's respect for its inexcusable notoriety.

Its reprehensible conduct in the automated election scandal that was denounced by the Supreme Court itself, its failure to even restrict the proliferation and uglification of prohibited posters in Metro Manila and other urban centers, the *dagdag-bawas* anomalies that have tainted the election of some members of the Senate, the suspicious activities of Luz Tancangco and other Comelec officials, its needless acquisition of million-peso vehicles for the ostentation of its members, the believable charges of the fraudulent election of President Gloria with the connivance of Virgilio Garcillano, and many other faults of character and competence demand no other action than its abolition as the supposed but failed protector of the ravished ballot.

The other alternative is for the current chair and members of the Comelec, including all their tainted personnel, to immediately resign and give up all their arrant privileges so they can be replaced by worthy civic servants who will not reject but instead respect suffrage as the oriflamme of the real democracy.

But that is hardly probable if they go by the attitude of their idolized exemplar, who insists on remaining where she is no longer fit or wanted. That's the sum and substance of Philippine democracy.

The 'clamor' for Cha-cha is really a whimper

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

IT'S NO LONGER JUST THE CHARTER change that the traditional politicians are using to get people to dance to their tune. They've introduced the "two-step" as well, in an attempt to get the public onto the dance floor, so to speak. The dance terminology makes it sound innocuous, but make no mistake: we are talking of world-class perfidy here, being perpetrated against the Filipino people.

Item: We are witnessing a government initiative under the guise of a "people's" initiative. Item: We are witnessing the legislative (House of Representatives) and the executive branches of government completely ignoring or going around decisions of the judiciary (Supreme Court). Item: We are witnessing the Commission on Elections—supposed to be an independent constitutional body—doing the bidding of executive and legislative leaders, amid growing fears that the Panganiban Court might follow in the footsteps of the Fernando Court during the Marcos dictatorship.

Where is the two-step in these perfidious acts? As the older generation may recall, there are several variations of this dance—e.g., the country two-step, the Texas two-step, even the foxtrot. Basically, it is a step-close-step (technically, glissade and chassé) movement, meaning, it actually takes three steps to execute. What the Cha-cha pushers have introduced may be called the Venecian two-step, or the Congressional two-step (VC two-step).

The chassé part (a step and a close) of the VC two-step is where they present the change to a parliamentary form of government as a "mere" amendment, rather than a revision. What is being amended? Article VI (the Legislative Department), Article VII (the Executive Department) and Article XVIII (Transitory Provisions)—seven sections of Article VI, four sections of Article VII and the entire Article XVIII, plus numerous provisions where the word "President" is replaced with "Prime Minister" and Congress or Senate or House with "Parliament."

The glissade (glide) part is the new article on transitory provisions, where most—although not all—of the perfidious operations take place; it already begins during the chasse part of the VC two-step. The most perfidious of these transitory provisions is Sec. 4 (4) which provides for what is essentially a constituent assembly to take place: "Within forty-five days from ratification of these amendments, the interim Parliament shall convene to **propose amendments to, or revisions of, this Constitution** consistent with the principles of local autonomy, decentralization, and a strong bureaucracy." (emphasis mine)

In other words, folks, the change to parliamentary system is like a Trojan horse. Once the Filipino people let it in, any and all sorts of changes can take place, courtesy of the interim parliament which is composed of incumbent legislators and executives, who will get another three years of public office without lifting a finger, since there will be no elections in 2007.

How do the Filipino people get screwed? Let us count the ways, all stemming from the claim of Speaker Jose de Venecia et al. that there is a "clamor" for changes in the Charter—a clamor which, simply, does not exist as clearly shown by the latest Pulse Asia survey (March 2006) results.

On the change to a parliamentary form of government, 54 percent of the Filipino people are not in favor, 33 percent are in favor, and 13 percent are undecided. Even if all the undecided vote in favor of change, the nays will still have a statistically significant edge over the yeas. This finding is buttressed by the answer to the question on unicameral legislature: 64 percent of Filipinos are against it. Moreover, the E socio-economic class, which is relatively the most open to a parliamentary system (50 percent not in favor, compared to 56 percent in the ABC and D classes), is at the same time, the most opposed to unicameralism: 67 percent against—which may suggest some confusion on the parliamentary system; but this could also mean—since it is smarter than assumed by the VC two-steppers—that it wants a check and balance system in the legislature.

On the "term limit" issue—whether people realize it or not—this is an integral part of this so-called "people's" initiative, snuck in there somewhere. Do the people favor "unlimited terms" for elected officials? (The officials can run for the same office until kingdom come, should they choose.) Pulse Asia says: 62 percent of the people are against it vs. 38 percent in favor.

On the proposal not to hold elections in 2007, the so-called No-el (the massive carrot to get legislators and local government officials to support the "people's" initiative)—64 percent of the people are against it nationwide.

This isn't all. Remember the "clamor" for a federal system? Survey results show 55 percent against, 32 percent in favor, and 13 percent undecided. Again, even if all the undecided vote for federalism, those against will still be significantly outnumber the former. Or how about the "clamor" for economic liberalization, at least in the form of allowing foreigners to own residential and industrial lands? Here, that "clamor" is more like a whimper: 79 percent of Filipinos are against, while 21 percent are in favor.

So what's the bottom line? Three conclusions, as far as I can see: (1) "clamor," as used by the VC two-steppers, is about as accurate as "chilling" as used by the anti-Gloria groups; (2) there is no bandwagon effect here—only a steamroller effect; and (3) should this "initiative" prosper through railroading, the people will slap it down in a plebiscite—unless the Comelec continues on its cheating mode.

We must guard our votes.

'Masa: tama na, husto na'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

OPPOSITION MEMBERS IN EFFECT ADMITTED that their efforts to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo have failed when senators, led by Senate President Franklin Drilon, came up with one more gimmick to force her resignation. During the President's birthday, Drilon, Senators Aquilino Pimentel, Francis Pangilinan, Sergio Osmeña and others held up, before TV cameras, "resign" stickers which they stuck to their cars, and then pressed for a snap election. I must say they looked every inch more like demonstrating students than Senate leaders. The senators fully realize that for a snap election to happen, the Constitution must first be amended, but that's not important to them. To get into the news is. It's really time we have a unicameral legislature. The senators have become irrelevant.

* * *

Japanese and American investors are among the foreigners who have noted how politics is destroying what are otherwise fantastic prospects for RP investments. But the distaste for the poisoned RP politics is even more prevalent locally. An SWS survey last month showed that many of our people are fed up with the endless and frequently senseless political squabbles and bickerings. Asked whether the opposition should stop all the politicking and help improve the country, 58 percent of those interviewed said yes. Not surprising—because they're the ones who get hurt the most—the *masa* classes of D and E gave the highest affirmative scores to the call for an end to political squabbles—61 percent and 54 percent, respectively, compared to the 50 percent of the combined ABC classes. Fifty-one percent of the respondents also agreed it's time to move on and let GMA focus on the real problems of the nation. On this issue D and E voted 54 percent and 44 percent, respectively.

The survey results clearly have one message for the opposition: *tama na, husto na*, time to move on and improve the lives of the people.

* * *

Earlier, I wrote about Filipino diplomat Jose Ma. Cariño's untiring efforts—during his six-year tour of duty in Spain—to track down paintings either done by Filipinos or about the Philippines (even if done by foreigners), as well as personal mementos of our Filipino *ilustrados* like Dr. Jose Rizal and Juan Luna. Many of the paintings and sketches on old Manila found their way into several award-winning books. One of these books is "Islas Filipinas 1663-1888," which features Teyet Pascual's exclusive collection on renowned painters Damian Domingo and Justiniano Asuncion, as well as the collection of the so-called "Malaspina Expedition," culled from the Museo Naval and the Museo de America in Madrid.

I was fascinated by Cariño's story about Admiral Antonio Malaspina, an Italian explorer in the employ of the Spanish Crown. It was the Age of the Enlightenment, and European powers were competing to explore the four corners of the earth. Malaspina was commissioned by the Spanish King in the 1780s to undertake expeditions to Asia, Australia and South America, and to gather information about the animal life and flora in those places. He brought along Italian illustrators; and among the countries they featured was the Philippines. Malaspina won tributes for his expeditions, but he later ended up in jail after he was discredited by the King's officials, and his works were scattered. The botanical drawings, including those about the Philippines, ended up in the Museo Jardin Botanico in Madrid, where Cariño found them.

* * *

At the dzRH show Cecile Alvarez and I co-host every Sunday evening at 9 p.m., Jomari Cariño talked about his research and the wealth of military specimen about the Philippines, which he found in the museums, notably the famed Museo Naval in the Spanish capital. Many years ago, I had the chance to do some articles on the Marcos hidden wealth in Switzerland and took along my two young sons. I recall how we were all dumbfounded to see there all the items that pertained to the Philippines, including a vast array of weaponry used in the anti-Moro campaign.

Alvarez, executive director of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, revealed Unesco's efforts to encourage dialogs among nations on the possible return of artifacts seized by military occupations, like the Balangiga bells. Taken from Samar in the earliest years of the American occupation of the Philippines, they are are now kept as war booty in Wyoming, USA. But there are many precedents in other countries. Perhaps the most famous are the "Elgin Marbles," which are ancient marble carvings on the frieze of the Parthenon in the Acropolis (Athens), which the occupational British forces carted away. They are now among the star attractions at the famous British Museum in London. When Greek actress Melina Mercouri was cultural minister of her country, she conducted an internationally publicized campaign to recover them for her country, but to no avail.

* * *

Ace photojournalist Mandy Navasero, begins her annual summer photo workshop for students, professionals and housewives today. The workshop will run until May 27. Every summer she takes her students on a shooting trip to some exotic place, but this year she outdoes herself. In coordination with Fiesta Tour's Wally Trinidad, Navasero will take photo enthusiasts on a safari to the windswept remote province of Batanes in the northernmost tip of Luzon, where the island of Amianan is within kissing distance of Taiwan. Our smallest and, perhaps, least populated province, Batanes has preserved the culture of the native Ivatans, who still live in their low-slung limestone houses with thick thatched roofs. Architectural remnants of the Spanish occupation also remain almost untouched. Those interested in the Batanes photo safari may call Navasero at 899-1787 or 896-3208 or Trinidad at Fiesta Tours, 521-7866.

An incident at Greenbelt

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IMAGINE YOURSELF BASKING IN A "TYPICAL" weekend spent in a mall. You've had lunch with your family, including your five children, your mother and your sister (your husband is out golfing in Tagaytay), and you're entering Greenbelt 3, a high-end mall where you look forward spending hours just window shopping or buying things you covet. All's well with your world, and you're happy as a clam in your small, secure and safe existence.

Imagine then this world shattered by an incident you never foresaw, planned or expected.

As Angela, the happy wife and mother of our story tells it, she was walking into the mall, trailing her mother and sister and holding two of her children by each hand, when the security guard suddenly appeared in front of her, leaned into her, reached for her handbag slung over her shoulder and touched her left breast. "I screamed and demanded to know why he touched me," she recalls. "And while he immediately apologized, saying '*hindi ko po sinasadya* (I didn't mean to do it),' I just froze and found myself unable to move."

Seeing other people about to enter the mall, the guard then signaled Angela to move on, asking her to "please step aside and let other people pass."

"But I refused to move until he explained himself," recalls Angela, and when the guard appeared bent on ignoring her, she demanded to see his superiors.

At this point, hearing Angela scream, her mother and sister rushed to her and demanded to know what happened. When she told them about the mashing, they began to question the guard, who replied that all he wanted to do was to inspect Angela's handbag. "But you let us through without even looking through our bags!" the two women said.

* * *

AT THIS point, the women were told to approach "Customer Service," where they were finally able to contact a security OIC by the name of "Rocky." When he came down to meet them, Rocky, without even summoning the guard, asked Angela to simply fill up an "incident report" to put the incident on record, to conform to "SOP."

Feeling uneasy, Angela called up a cousin-in-law who is a lawyer (her husband is also a lawyer, but he wasn't picking up her calls) and told him what happened. He advised her not to sign anything and to instead demand a written statement from the Emirates Security Agency (for which the guard worked) acknowledging that the incident had taken place inside Greenbelt.

Hearing this, Rocky grew sullen and told her that if she continued to refuse to fill up the form, then "*magkita na lang tayo sa presinto* (let's see each other in the police precinct)." By this time, Angela was well and truly angry, not just because of the incident with the guard, but also because of the way she felt the official of Emirates was trying to intimidate her and dismiss her concerns.

"*Tinatakot mo ba ako* (Are you trying to frighten me)?" Angela wanted to know. "*Anong akala mo sa akin, hindi ako seryoso* (Do you think I'm not serious about this)?"

It was at this point that Angela's husband Edgar called her and, hearing what happened, reiterated the warning for Angela not to sign anything and to demand a written statement from the security agency.

* * *

"PERHAPS when they realized that my husband was a lawyer, they decided to treat me more seriously," says Angela. Another security officer, a certain Albert who was the operations manager, introduced himself and immediately calmed things down.

"He was really good at PR (public relations)," Angela grudgingly admits, but when he insisted on staying by her side, even as she said her husband would be joining her soon, she had to beg him to stay away "because my children were getting upset."

When Edgar arrived, Albert immediately approached him and sought to smooth things over, telling him that they did not condone such behavior from any of their guards and promised that the statement they were demanding would be issued.

"They finally gave me that statement," says Edgar in a narrative he prepared. And in it "the guard admitted that he had 'accidentally' touched a '*maselang bahagi ng katawan ng complainant* (a sensitive part of the complainant's body).'"

"I told them that I wanted the incident blottered," Edgar recounts, "and they brought the guard to the police station (in Makati) for processing." It was here where Angela accused the guard of committing an "act of lasciviousness," but when she and Edgar finally met with a fiscal, she resolved that the charge should be reduced to mere "unjust vexation" allegedly because the police found "no lewd designs" on the part of the guard. The guard is now out on bail.

* * *

FOR its part, Emirates Security and Maintenance Systems Inc., through general manager Marinette Yan Aglipay (wife of former PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay) sent Angela a letter the following Monday apologizing "for what happened last Saturday" and repeating the guard's contention that "it was unintentional on his part and he is very sorry about it. (Our guards) are just doing their job but sometimes accidents happen."

"It's a letter I would advise my own clients to write," remarks Edgar, stressing that he and Angela are neither placated nor satisfied by the letter.

Angela is more open in her expression of outrage. "You go to Greenbelt, and, of course, you feel safe there. And yet the very people who are supposed to make you feel safe are the ones *na binabastos ka pa* (who treat you disrespectfully)."

"Am I supposed to be happy and content with a mere apology?" asks Angela. Or as Edgar puts it: "Is the dignity of a woman so dispensable and insignificant that it can be dismissed, despite her protests, by a simple 'Sorry, ma'am, it was an accident, please move on because I've got work to do?'"

Asia's dysfunctional democracies .

WORLD VIEW

Satyabrata Rai Chowdhuri

THE ABRUPT RESIGNATION OF THAILAND'S Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is but another sign of a disturbing paradox: the more "vigorous" Asian democracy becomes, the more dysfunctional it is.

There is no shortage of examples. The attempt by opposition parties last year to impeach South Korea's President Roh Moo-hyun on the flimsiest of excuses; Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's inability to pass legislation through a parliament controlled by the opposition Kuomintang; Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo's stalemated first term and the repeated rumors of looming coup attempts against her: each bears testimony to a form of democratic paralysis in Asia.

If deadlock and confusion were the only results, such political impasses might be tolerable. But chronic stalemate has confronted many Asian democracies with the threat of being discredited, a potential for violence and the prospect of economic decline.

Indeed, the precedents of democratic immobility in Asia are hardly encouraging. For example, since Pakistan's creation in 1947, partisan divisions ensured that no elected government has been able to serve its full term. So Pakistanis grimly learned to accept military rule as their destiny.

The problem in Asia often arises from something the French call "cohabitation," an awkward arrangement by which a directly elected president must co-exist with a parliament controlled by a rival party or parties. The United States and Europe's mature democracies may function well enough with the "checks and balances" of divided government (though the Republicans' bid to impeach President Bill Clinton eight years ago might suggest otherwise), but in Asia the failure to bestow executive and legislative powers on a single institution is usually a terrible drawback.

This seems especially true when a government tries to enact radical economic or political reforms. The elected president wants to act, but the assembly refuses to approve the necessary laws. Or vice versa.

The pattern begins in parliamentary deadlock. Incompetent leaders blame legislatures for their failures; legislators blame presidents from rival parties. Finger-pointing replaces responsibility, fueling popular demand for a strongman (or woman) who can override political divisions. Indira Gandhi's brief "emergency rule" in the 1970s was partly the result of such institutional dysfunction.

Divided government also plays into the hands of Asia's separatists. At a critical moment for Sri Lanka's peace process, President Kumaratunga was so incensed by the policies of her political rival, Prime Minister Wickremessinghe, that she sacked three of his ministers and called elections almost four years early. The only people who seem to have benefited from this democratic division are the murderous Tamil Tigers.

Similarly, in Nepal, a Maoist insurgency has taken advantage of divisions between the king and parliament to gain control of much of the countryside.

True, Asian democracies, however unstable, are preferable to autocracies, whether military, as in Pakistan and Burma, or communist, as in China and Vietnam. But the danger in a weakened democracy is not merely blocked legislation and ineffective government. Ambitious but thwarted presidents are easily tempted to take unconstitutional measures; after all, they reason, the people elected them directly.

The same is true of some prime ministers. Indeed, one of the causes of the protests that led to the resignation of Thailand's Thaksin was the accusation that he was weakening his country's democratic traditions in favor of personal rule.

Given these precedents, perhaps Asian policymakers should consider the merits of doing away with "cohabitation" and adopting systems where electoral victory translates into real power. Of course, parliamentary political systems are far from perfect. Neither Singapore nor Malaysia, where ruling parties have long dominated the parliaments, has a political culture as healthy as in Taiwan or South Korea.

But in parliamentary democracies such as Japan and India, an elected leader runs the country until the day his or her party or coalition loses its legislative majority. This means that governments are judged not by their ability to outmaneuver legislatures, but by the quality of their policies. This seems to be a more efficient—and politically more stable—form of democracy than the unhappy cohabitation that produces such ugly confrontations of the type seen across the region.

For Abraham Lincoln was right: a house divided against itself cannot stand. In many Asian democracies, only institutional reconstruction will prevent collapse. ***Project Syndicate***

Satyabrata Rai Chowdhuri is emeritus professor at India's University Grants Commission and a former professor of international relations at Oxford University.

Breaking free

YOUNG BLOOD

Buona Raya V. Lacaba

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE YOU'RE TRAPPED IN YOUR life? Like you try your hand at so many different things, but in the end you're still your same old self?

I used to have this idea that it's during the summer that we do our growing up. You don't see your classmates for two months and when you go back, you discover that you've changed.

That ended once I stepped into college. I developed a steady routine of spending summer and semestral breaks with my friends, taking up classes and going around shopping malls, getting a tan in sun-kissed beaches and partying. And to my horror, I found myself three years later wearing the same clothes, talking the same way and having the exact same memories as my friends.

One summer was different from the rest, however. For a whole month, I worked around the bar, the kitchen and the dining room of a high-end resort in Palawan to complete 250 hours of practicum training in the food and beverage department in fulfillment of a course requirement. It was my first time away from family, home and everything familiar.

We weren't there as guests. And my five companions and I realized that as soon as the guests got off the boat at the first pier, where there was music and gay people handing out *buko* juice in pretty bamboo glasses. The boat took us to the second pier, where a security guard was our welcoming committee. He inspected our bags closely. No one helped us as we struggled across the sand lugging our heavy luggage.

Then we were handed our uniforms: three giant white shirts that had yellowed and frayed and had obviously been used by several other people before us and a desolate pair of faded khaki shorts. We were also given rust-stained plates. Feeling like martyrs, we didn't say a word of complaint as we trudged to the dingy employees' cafeteria and swallowed down the first of many unappetizing meals consisting of rice and *nilaga* that tasted suspiciously like a bag of black pepper left to brew in hot water.

That same night, the employees in charge of marine sports, led by this tall, muscular guy caught me alone at the bar and actually tried to pick me up. Since I was going to be stuck with them for a full month on the same island, I gritted my teeth and let them subject me to several rounds of hand shaking.

These same guys continued to harass us by blocking our way in the cafeteria or simply staring at us. Angry pride made me brush off any offers of friendship from anyone among them. I lumped them all together as people who wanted to bully us.

I was wrong. Slowly, the "kuyas" gained my trust and I came to understand that they were, in their own way, trying to be my friend. In two weeks' time, they were staying up with us at night to belt out songs on the videoke although they had to work the 5 a.m. shift the following day. They coordinated their days off to coincide with ours and insisted on spending their measly P196 a day salary by bringing us to all the must-see places in Puerto Princesa. If we so much as mentioned that we liked something—a T-shirt, a bracelet or whatever—it was ours. It was embarrassing, but they did all this with so much quiet sincerity that we couldn't refuse them.

Soon I knew that I had found a place where everything was peaceful and I didn't have to worry about trivial stuff, like if this girl was annoyed with me because she thought I was out to steal her boyfriend or if I had worn the same shirt several times already. I could feel that the people there accepted me and for once in my life, I didn't have to pretend to be anyone other than what I really was.

Two days before we left, a classmate and I sat on the sand, looking out at the mangroves, the water and the wide expanse of sky and the beauty of the surroundings. I recalled everything that happened to me in the past month and it blew my mind completely. I didn't want to leave just yet.

We bawled like babies as the boat took us away from the island for the final time that summer. Even Ate Mhegs, the shyest of the kitchen staff, walked to the pier to join the other employees as they waved goodbye.

When I got back to Manila, my dad met me at the pier and he immediately noticed that I was not the same person anymore. Later, I went out with my friends and they remarked that I had matured. I knew that it was my summer in Palawan that made the difference.

The primary lesson that I learned there was that people were to be trusted. All of them. I can't go around assuming that all sweaty people wearing sandos are maniacs, as I had been doing here in the big city. These people had families. Some of them had the biggest hearts I have ever had the good fortune of knowing.

Also, I learned to walk in their shoes. I found out what it was like to be so hungry that it felt like someone was tearing at my stomach all the time. I also experienced their indignant rage over the unfairness and wastefulness of being told to throw out the leftover food that we were not allowed to eat.

My Palawan summer was not a vacation but it was an experience that I will always treasure because it helped me grow. It showed me my inner strength because all through that one month, I was determined to make it. And I did not only survive but made the most out of the experience.

If in the past I felt trapped, that summer in Palawan, I broke free.

Buona Raya V. Lacaba, 23, took up BS Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. She now works in a bank.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Deficient justice

"One cannot question Fr. (Joaquin) Bernas' integrity and intellectual brilliance which are wanting in the present secretary of justice (Raul Gonzalez)."

—Bro. Manuel de Leon, vice chair of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines, on the justice secretary's statement branding Bernas as a "guru of destabilization," after the priest described the "people's initiative" to revise the Constitution as a "desperate" act

Fallacy of the lesser evil

I UNDERSTAND BONG AUSTERO'S anger. ("Middle-class and angry" by Rina Jimenez-David, PDI, 3/12/06) And I do like that he seems to be genuinely concerned for the country. I'll take any kind of reaction over apathy, even if it goes against mine.

Still, I find Austero's kind of reasoning lamentable.

The guy is a pragmatist. Many sensible people may agree with him, but I can't. Their cry is: Pick the lesser evil, move on, and focus on the work that needs to be done. Forgive, just as we have forgiven before.

Yes, I get it, but I don't buy it. I'd rather protest alongside Randy David and the rest of the "bleeding hearts." Not because I prefer the greater evil. Not because I don't want to move on, or because I don't see the work that lies ahead, or because I can't forgive.

It's simply because there's an evil that must be fought. So we must fight it. After we succeed in this fight and a greater evil emerges, then we fight on—again. This is the meaning of vigilance, and only vigilance can defeat "*sige-na-lang*" and "*bahala na*." Only vigilance will keep Philippine politics from becoming a bigger joke than it already is. Vigilance will keep our nation from poverty, hunger and corruption.

If we're lucky, then perhaps the right leader will eventually come along. But this kind of luck will never come if we just shrug our shoulders in the face of evil taking hold of our lives; and if we stop believing that the best is yet to come.

And we can move on only if we have a clear idea of where we want to move on to. Even so, we must fight not because we choose to ignore the work done, but because we acknowledge that fighting evil is a fundamental part of the effort to get the work done.

Austero argues that the fight against the present evil is a pathetic cause because of the people who are leading it. A classic case of ad hominem. So he misses the point of those who, like me, have no ambitions of becoming president, and still choose to fight.

We fight because we deserve better. Lying, stealing and cheating should never be accepted as indispensable political realities. The only decent way we can respond to these irregularities is to make the perpetrators accountable for these acts. If the authorities prevent us from doing this through legal channels, then the only reasonable way left for the people to do is to head for the streets, as we did in Edsa II.

The argument that there is "no better alternative" is quite lame. And the claim (while invoking "Christian forgiveness") that maintaining the status quo is the "higher moral ground" sounds insane.

The question on Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's leadership is something higher than what Austero allows himself to see.

—MICHAEL FRANCIS IAN VEGA II,
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LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Confidentiality in EPCIB-BDO deal meant to quell stock market speculation

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE MARCH 30 column of Conrado Banal III, titled "Scheme milk." The article discussed the Letter of Intent (LOI) that the Social Security System (SSS) signed with Banco de Oro (BDO) on Dec. 30, 2003 for the sale of its 188 million shares in Equitable PCIBank (EPCIB). Please allow us to clarify some issues he cited.

1. "In effect, the SSS was to sell the shares at P43 each, with the payment coming after seven long years."

The statement is incorrect. Under the terms of the LOI, the SSS would sell the shares at P43.50, which represents a 30 percent premium over EPCIB's last traded price of 33.50 on Dec. 30, 2003.

Initially the SSS would get a cash down payment of P1 billion, with the balance to be paid in a six-and-a-half-year, zero-coupon, non-amortizing note with a combined total face value of about P14 billion. This was subsequently revised in January 2004 to a cash payment of P8 billion.

2. "But here is the thing—the deal was done in a hurry, during a midnight meeting on a holiday, reportedly called by the SSS chair. If I remember right, the SSS commission was called to a special meeting on Dec. 30, 2003—National Hero's Day—which lasted until midnight." This is pure speculation. Dec. 30 was not a holiday. It was a regular working day because the celebration of National Hero's Day was moved to another date. The Dec. 30 meeting started late in the afternoon and lasted until midnight. The deal was not done in a hurry. The Social Security Commission met a number of times prior to Dec. 30 to discuss various issues with the buyer.

The deal was kept under wraps because confidentiality is part and parcel of transactions of such magnitude and sensitivity. It was meant to quell stock market speculations and insider trading.

—JOEL P. PALACIOS,
assistant vice president,
Media Affairs Department,
Social Security System,
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

Not in conspiracy with Aragoncillo and Aquino

LOOKS LIKE UNKNOWN INDIVIDUALS IN the INQUIRER want to link me to the Leandro Aragoncillo case. Allow me to say it as clearly as possible. I have not corresponded with Aragoncillo directly or indirectly. I don't know the man from Cain.

Michael Ray Aquino has e-mailed me requests to help him with his problems with the Department of Foreign Affairs. All his e-mail to me have been made public and copies have been sent to the INQUIRER through the newspaper's reporters.

Still, the INQUIRER persists in involving me in the alleged criminal activities of either Aragoncillo or Aquino.

I remember months ago when news that Aragoncillo and Aquino were indicted in the United States broke into the media, the US press accounts did not include my name. But an INQUIRER report did. May I know what the INQUIRER is really up to?

Is the INQUIRER accusing me of having broken US law in conspiracy with Aragoncillo or Aquino? If so, what is your basis for saying so?

—SEN. AQUILINO Q. PIMENTEL JR.

SC justice said nothing about Batasan 5 case

I AM WRITING TO CORRECT THE NEWS REport, ("SC may resolve media suit soon," PDI, 4/3/06) written by Julie S. Alipala of the INQUIRER's Mindanao bureau, which quoted Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez as saying that the Supreme Court would also try to resolve the case filed against the so-called Batasan 5. It was an inaccurate and misleading attribution. Justice Gutierrez did not give any such statement.

In response to a question raised during the turnover of Zamboanga City's Hall of Justice, all that Justice Gutierrez told the INQUIRER reporter was that the Supreme Court might find the opportunity to resolve the cases involving EO 464 and Proclamation No. 1017 when it holds its summer session in Baguio, starting next week.

May we reassure the public that these cases remain matters of high priority and the Court is determined to resolve them at the soonest possible time, with due regard to the requisites of due process.

—ISMAEL G. KHAN JR.,
assistant court administrator and chief,
Supreme Court Information Office,
Supreme Court, Padre Faura, Manila

I am standing by my story. It was based on an interview that I and ABS-CBN reporter Ian Francisco had with Justice Gutierrez inside the office of Judge Eric Elumba. In that interview, although she refused to share her insights lest she'd preempt some cases that were awaiting action by the Supreme Court, she informed us that the pending cases on the CPR, EO 464 and Batasan 5 were still under discussion. She said that the Court would soon be promulgating its decision, "perhaps, when we have our session in Baguio City starting April 10 to May 5."

—JULIE S. ALIPALA,
correspondent, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Like a lotus

BRAVO! BRAVO! TWO NEWS STORIES IN THE March 19 issue of the INQUIRER—about the Fil-Am boy who raised funds for the victims of the Saint Bernard landslide in Southern Leyte and the Pinoy hostage who was freed by his captors for an act of kindness in the past—were a great way to end the week.

The INQUIRER just boosted my flagging Filipino pride and reaffirmed the beauty and goodness inherent in the heart of every Filipino. The stories reminded us that we are like the lotus—even from the dirtiest and most oppressive muck, we can spring forth the most beautiful bloom. I'll be looking forward to the INQUIRER's next Sunday issue.

—JULIUS L. DE LA CRUZ,
julsitos@yahoo.com

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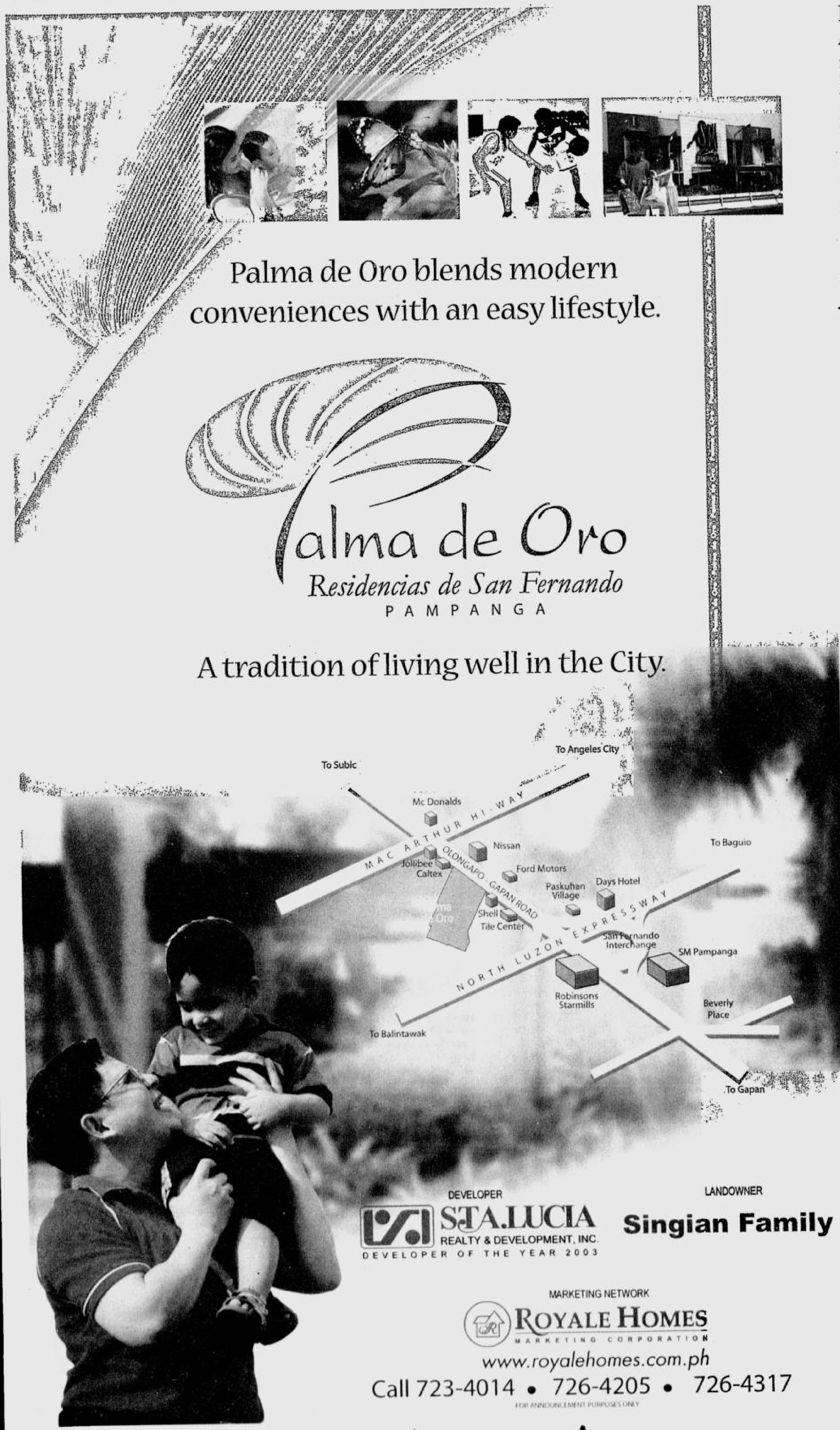
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Cha-cha drive alarms CBCP; issues pastoral letter

From page A1

ercise was being carried out.

Speaking as one for the first time since the signature campaign was launched by the coalition called Sigaw ng Bayan, the prelates urged the faithful not to be "complacent and inactive in the face of this present issue of Charter change, which is so crucial to the future of our country and people."

The bishops sought the "moral justification" of the campaign, and stressed that the revisions and amendments must ensure "shifts toward principled politics, transparency and accountability, electoral and institutional reform, and more efficient delivery of services to the people, especially the poorest."

The CBCP issued the pastoral letter a day after the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference met with Sen. Manuel Roxas II at a restaurant in Makati City.

At the meeting, Roxas assured the BBC that 21 senators were ready to block Charter change, according to Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez.

"They (the senators) asked the CBCP to support their stand against Cha-Cha," the bishop told reporters Thursday night.

Major criticisms

The pastoral letter practically summarized all the major criticisms aired against the people's initiative, which President Macapagal-Arroyo had described as a "train that had left the station."

"Signatures are apparently collected without adequate information, discussion and education," the bishops said. "The manner in which these signatures are supposedly collected, including door-to-door campaigns, are not conducive to the kind of informed participation that such fundamental changes demand."

The prelates appeared convinced that the people remained wanting in explanations and discussions on the "complexities and variations" of the proposed parliamentary system.

"What form of parliamentary system, how such a parliamentary system will truly serve the common good and the interest of the nation, especially the poor, have not been articulated," they said, adding:

"Instead, people are given general and sweeping promises of political stability and reform that will automatically come with a new political system."

Pressure to verify

The Commission on Elections in the Eastern Visayas accused local government executives and regional officials of the Department of Interior and Local Government of pressuring them into speeding up the verification of the signatures gathered during the March 25 barangay assemblies.

In separate interviews, Comelec assistant regional director Jose Nick Mendros and Leyte elections supervisor Manuel Villegas cited complaints from the field on the matter.

"Our election officers in the field are being pressured by [local] officials and the DILG people to finish the verification process. They had set a deadline for the Comelec to finish the process today (Friday)," Mendros told the INQUIRER.

Comelec offices in the region started verifying the signatures last week.

But Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, spokesperson of the Union of the Local Authorities of the Philippines and the Governors' League of the Philippines, denied the charge.

"It is not true. We respect the Comelec as a constitutional body," Evardone said yesterday in a text message.

DILG regional director William Paler had repeatedly denied their office's involvement in the signature campaign.

"Our job was only to monitor the barangay assemblies. That's all," he said.

No instructions

An elections supervisor in a Leyte town claimed that the mayor had asked their office to finish the process quickly.

"But I cannot simply do that. There were no explicit instructions from our central office to speed up the verification. I really do not know why this thing is being fast-tracked," said the officer who asked not to be named.

Villegas said that in the absence of instructions, Comelec field officers should not give in to pressure exerted on them.

"I told them to do their job insofar as verifying the signatures [is concerned]. Our [central] office did not set any deadline for us to finish the process," he told the INQUIRER.

Villegas said they were even at a loss as to what they would do with the signatures after these had been verified.

He said he had written the Comelec central office for guidelines but that there had been no response.

In the meantime, Villegas said, Comelec personnel in the region had been instructed to maintain "outmost impartiality and independence in the verification of these signatures and all submitted documents [concerning] this signature campaign."

Earlier, Presidential Assistant for Eastern Visayas Victor Domingo said they had gathered signatures from over 20 percent of the region's over 1 million voters and had met the required 3 percent from each of the 12 districts.

No popular support

In General Santos City, the signature campaign has failed to gain popular support.

For example, of the more than 20,000 registered voters in Barangay Apopong, only about 600 signed the petition.

A similar situation was observed in Barangay Batomelong, where only 29 of the more than 8,000 registered voters signed.

Delia Rabanes, chair of the Association of Barangay Captains, said village officials did not help distribute the forms because they were against Charter change and did not want to be associated with the signature drive.

Rabanes said Malacañang and the DILG were "not telling the truth."

"The DILG was the one who directed us to conduct a house-to-house signature campaign," she said.

Diverting attention

In Davao City, Councilor Bonifacio Militar said Charter change was the administration's attempt to divert public attention from the yet unresolved controversy surrounding Ms Arroyo's presidency.

"The President is so brilliant in diverting the attention of the people. The issue of whether to change the Constitution is her way of trying to get off the hook. I bet she is laughing at all of us now. Maybe she's enjoying the thought that she has fooled us. Perhaps she has been rolling on the floor thinking how stupid we all are," he said.

Militar said Charter change would not benefit the public.

"Changing the form of government is the wrong prescription. It will never give us the chance to escape what we have and what we are today. I still believe that change should come from changing our values as a people ... changing our attitude toward others and toward ourselves," he said.

Councilor Angela Librado-Trinidad said Charter change would not solve the economic and political crisis.

"The bigger problem is not the form of government but the existing class composition of the government," Trinidad said.

Exercise in futility

Lawyer Abraham Johnny Asuncion, elections supervisor in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, said the signature campaign was doomed to fail because irregularities in the gathering process had been discovered.

"It's an exercise in futility. It's millions of [pesos] and lots of effort and time wasted," he said.

Asuncion made the statement on Thursday after receiving the initial batch of signatures that were verified by Comelec officers in various Nueva Vizcaya towns.

Among the flaws that were easily noted, he said, were that the signatures appeared to have been faked or that several names were signed by only one person.

In some villages, the number of people who signed the forms reportedly exceeded the number of registered voters.

Under mango tree

"[The election officers] were laughing because the defects were glaring. Many of the signatures were totally different [from those in Comelec records]. Even illiterate and dead voters managed to sign," Asuncion said.

"As our personnel put it, these [forms] were signed under the mango tree," he said. *With reports from Aquiles Z. Zonio and Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

New SC . . .

From page A1

volving the Mining Act of 1995 and the ill-gotten-wealth cases filed against the Marcoses.

"It can overturn its ruling" in March 1997, wherein it declared Republic Act No. 6735 (the Initiative and Referendum Act of 1989) as inadequate to cover the system of a people's initiative, he said. "But up to now it has not yet been abandoned. Unless they get the majority, it stays."

But Velasco clarified that such a change of stand could happen in any case, not only in the issue of the people's initiative.

Continuing pitch

The President yesterday continued to be the drum-beater for Charter change.

"It is high time now to give a new political structure a chance," she said in a statement issued before the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines issued a pastoral letter expressing alarm over the ongoing signature drive to amend the 1987 Constitution. *(See story on Page A1.)*

In a news release, Sigaw ng Bayan proclaimed a "moral and democratic" victory after purportedly gathering 8.3 million signatures.

Lawyer Raul Lambino, Sigaw ng Bayan spokesperson, dismissed the opposition's claim that a "snap" election would help resolve the political crisis.

The 8.3 million signatures "clearly show that what Filipinos want is not a change of leadership, but a change in the system of government," Lambino said.

For the third straight day, Ms Arroyo made a pitch for Charter change, stressing that the present political and economic conditions were "already ripe" for constitutional amendments.

She insisted that the country was "taking the right path" in terms of constitutional reforms.

"[T]he necessary constitutional amendment would further give boost to the economic reform measures we have been instituting," she said.

Earlier in the day, the President visited the Batasan Hills to lead a Serbisyo Muna Caravan, which saw her handing out health cards and certificates that would allow the operation of Botika sa Barangay outlets.

Some reporters said they spotted certain people handing out leaflets on Charter change. One reporter said a booth of the Philippine Information Agency there distributed these primers along with a comic book on the Reformed Value-Added Tax.

Asked to comment, Michael Defensor, the President's chief of staff, said he saw nothing wrong in these actions. He said the leaflets would help educate the public on Charter change.

"I would have done it myself," Defensor said in a phone interview.

Don't block it

Mandaue Councilor Carlos Fortuna, an advocate of Charter change, called on its critics not to stop the filing of a petition for a people's initiative.

He said it was only when that had taken place that critics could question the matter before the Supreme Court and resolve the question of whether a people's initiative could be allowed or not.

Fortuna, secretary general of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap), also said the group was hopeful that the Supreme Court would reverse its 1997 ruling on the people's initiative.

The Ulap and Sigaw ng Bayan, a coalition of nongovernment and civic groups, had been gathering signatures to effect a people's initiative for a shift to a unicameral and parliamentary form of government despite the tribunal's ruling.

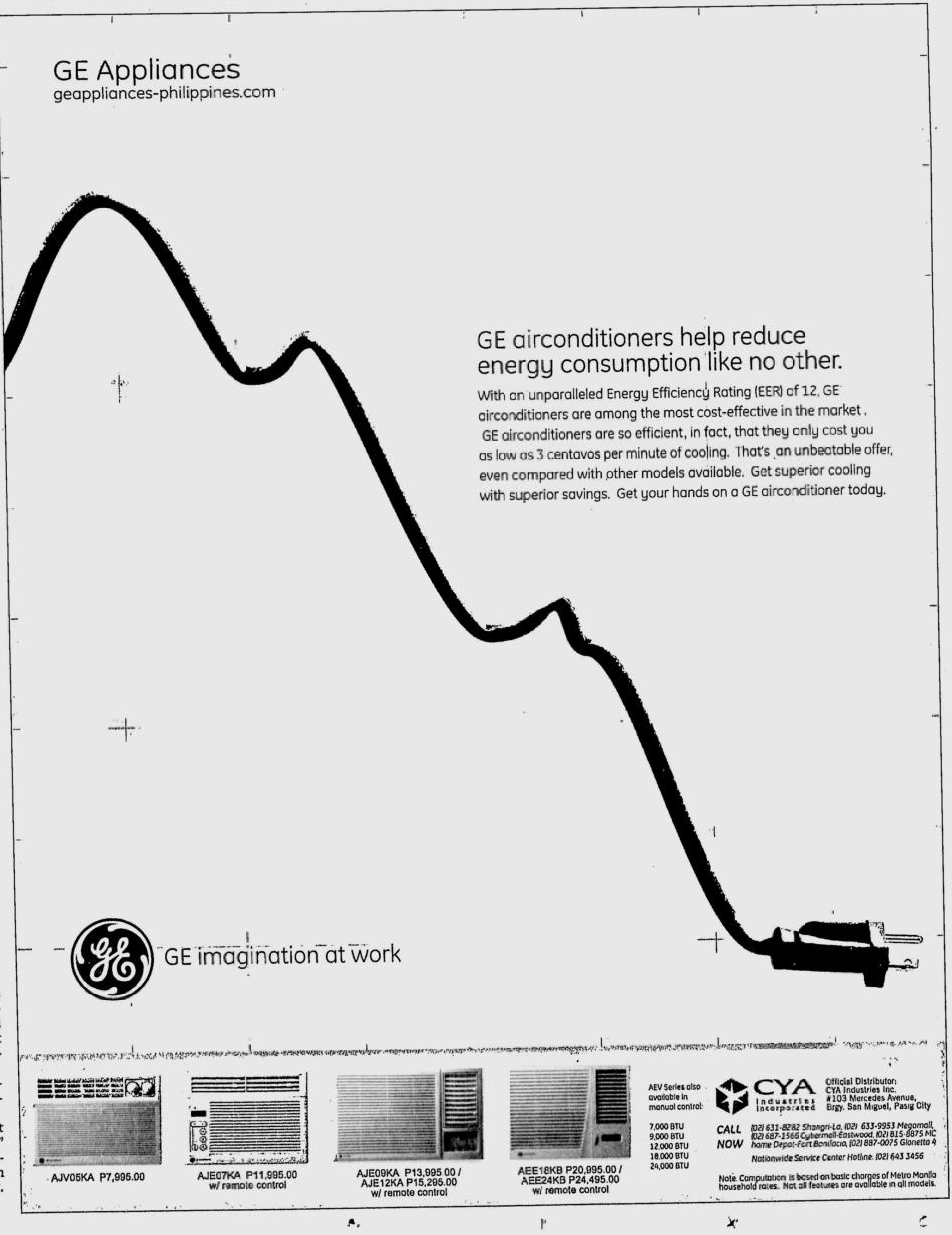
Parties opposed to the people's initiative had been pointing out that the act was illegal in light of the 1997 Supreme Court decision.

But according to Fortuna, the debate on whether the law allowed for a people's initiative or not could only be resolved once a case had been lodged at the Supreme Court.

"Hopefully, the Supreme Court will change its mind," Fortuna said at the Ambassador Hotel forum. "The people's initiative is a political exercise, not just a purely legal exercise. It can't be restricted by mere legal technicalities."

He also pointed out that the tribunal's decision was "not a majority one or even unanimous."

"Whether the decision will be reversed, it may depend on the current Chief Justice," Fortuna said, referring to Artemio Panganiban, who had written a dissenting opinion on the case. *With a report from Leila B. Salaverria*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56TH WORLD HEALTH DAY

Execs focus on exodus of nurses, docs

HEALTH OFFICIALS YESTERDAY focused on the exodus of nurses and other medical workers at the rate of about 15,000 a year for better-paying jobs abroad as they marked the 56th World Health Day yesterday.

"It is a serious, serious situation," World Health Organization spokesperson Peter Cordingley said, noting that even Filipino doctors abandoned their practices and went back to medical schools to enroll in nursing courses.

The number is more than in any other country, with the United States, Britain and lately Australia the main destinations.

WHO country representative Jean Marc Olive warned that the exodus was expected to persist until 2015, with annual demand for medical workers in the United States and Europe estimated to be about 800,000.

"In the Philippines the shortage of nurses is starting to be felt, therefore it's a pressing issue that needs to be addressed, but not the quick fix solutions," Olive told a news conference.

He urged the government to "look into the needs of the health workers" and adopt plans to convince them to stay.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque acknowledged the problem, estimating that 85 percent of the country's nurses have left the Philippines, where four in 10 people live on P100 a day or less.

"The signs and symptoms have been there long ago but not given much attention," Duque said. "These are the challenges confronting the Department of Health now."

Duque said the crisis was adversely affecting hospitals in the provinces to a greater degree than those in Metro Manila. He drew attention to a recent DOH inventory which showed 500 vacant plantilla positions for doctors and nurses in hospitals in the countryside.

Medical workers started to go overseas in large numbers when the country's mass labor export program begun in the 1970s.

The temporary workers, along with Filipinos living permanently in wealthier countries, sent back a record $10.7 billion to their families in the Philippines through the formal banking system last year, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Duque lamented insufficient funding for the implementation of health legislations such as the Magna Carta for Health Workers and the Nursing Act. The measures, if properly implemented, would make health professionals think twice before leaving.

He disclosed that there were 35 laws seeking to provide more beds in hospitals but were not backed with funding.

Duque said the government would support proposals to enact a law that would require fresh graduates from nursing and medical schools to stay in the country for between six months and one year before they are allowed to practice abroad.

He said the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office had pledged to finance a scholarship program to put about 100 students through medical school every year.

The PCSO had budgeted P252 million, enough for 6,000 students, he said. "The first batch will enter this June," Duque added. *AFP, Christian V. Esguerra*

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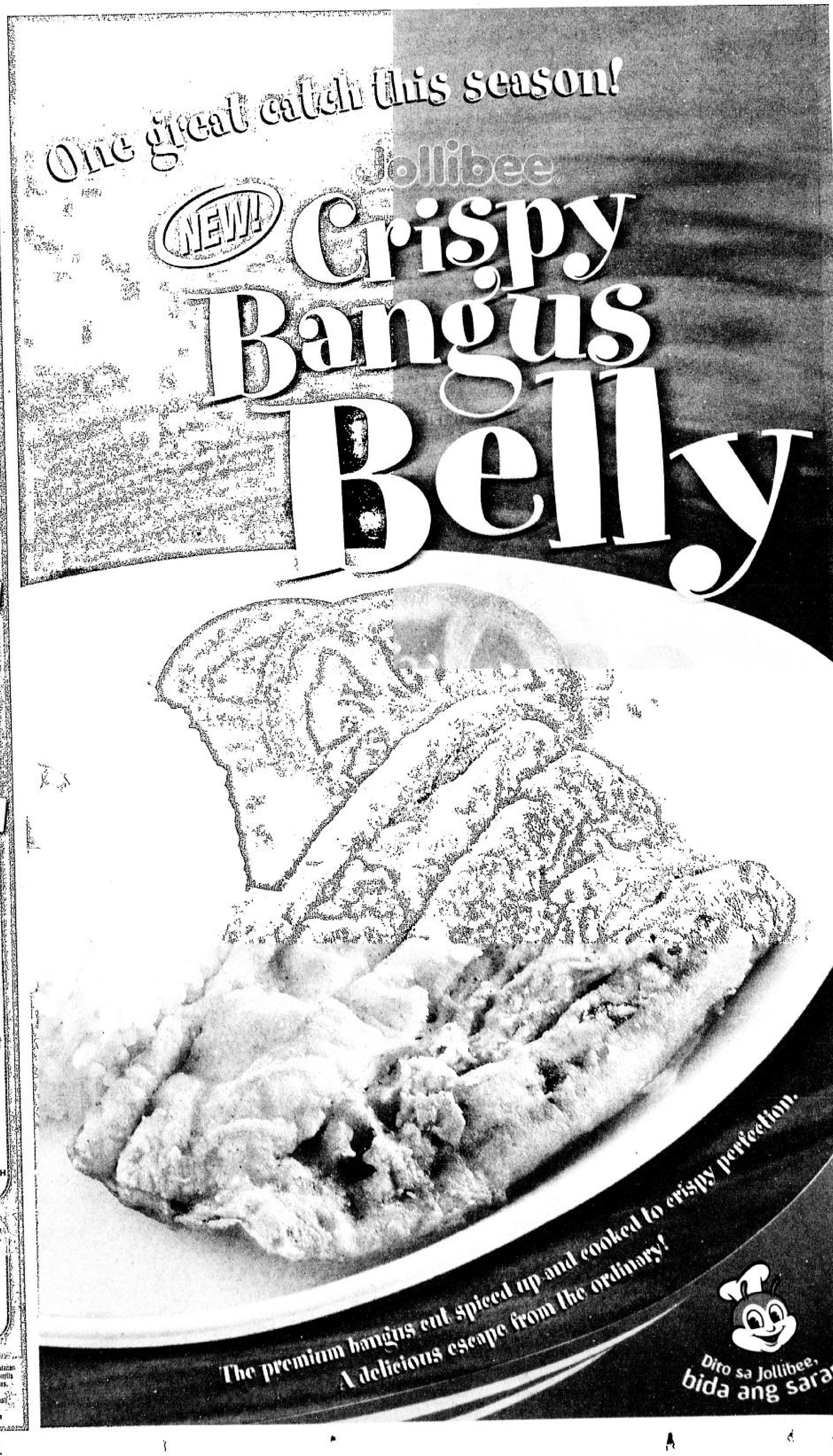
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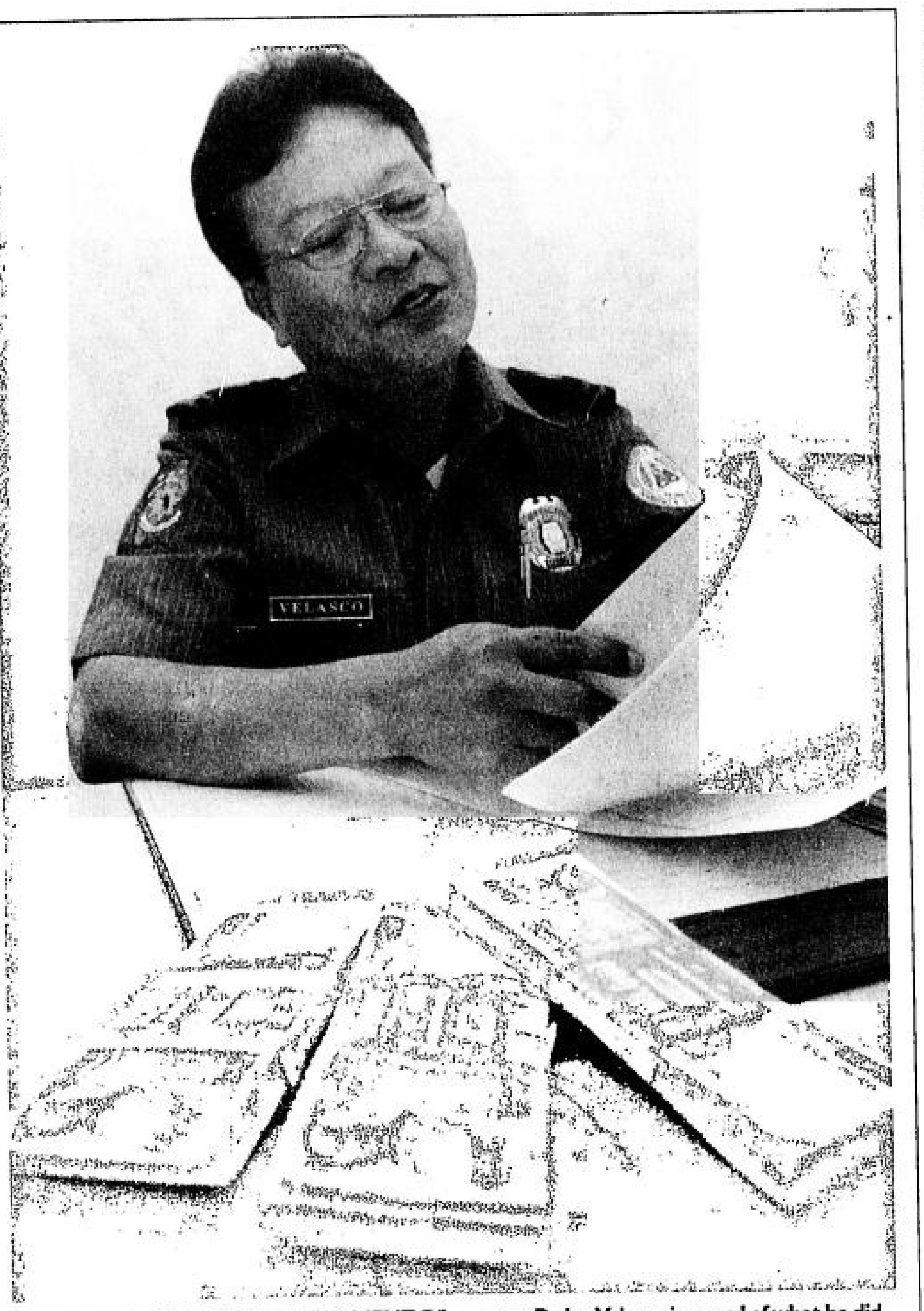


TWO YEARS AWAY FROM RETIREMENT, P/Inspector Pedro Velasco is proud of what he did on the job as well as what he didn't do, like refusing to receive a bribe of P300,000. RAFFY LERMA

Cop could not send 3 sons to college but rejects P300,000 bribe

From page A1

Perhaps more importantly, Velasco's rejection of the glitter of money has bolstered the admiration for him' that his wife Judith and their four children hold.

Pride in the police force is the one thing Velasco hopes to bequeath as legacy to his fellow policemen and to his children when he retires in 2008, according to the 54-year-old officer.

The soft-spoken officer had always wanted to be a policeman.

He said his inspiration came from the cops in his town in Bantay, Ilocos Sur, during the 1960s when policemen were still "being idolized."

"They looked good in their uniform," he said.

The son of a farmer and the second youngest among eight children, Velasco went to Manila in 1972 and studied criminology while working as a civilian employee of the Armed Forces in Camp Aguinaldo.

In 1974, he joined the Army as an enlisted man. A dozen years later, Velasco shifted to the Philippine Constabulary. When the PC and the Integrated National Police merged to become the Philippine National Police in 1991, he became a police officer.

Heart 'jumping with joy'

During his 32 years in the service, the former antinarcotics officer was offered bribe money worth hundreds of thousands of pesos at least three times.

Each time, he said, he turned the offer down. The first time he did, it felt very good.

"My heart was jumping with joy," he said in an interview in his office this week. "Before you become a cop, you take an oath that you would serve the nation. Accepting bribe money is not included in that oath."

But being straight has its price.

With his meager salary, Velasco could not even afford to send his first three sons to college. A pay slip he took out from his pocket showed what his take-home pay is—about P10,000 monthly.

The rest of his P28,000 gross salary goes to loans, which he would make every time "food on the table was not enough."

The Velascos live in a housing project in Metro Manila. They plod on by keeping a tight hold on the little money they have.

Prayers to the Virgin

The family, for one, rarely goes to an outing.

Knowing he could not send his sons to school, Velasco did the next best thing. When they reached 18, he taught them how to drive and, with their help, the family succeeded in sending the youngest child, a girl, to school.

The daughter, Judilyn, has finished accountancy and is now working for a bank—a career for the girl which Velasco said he had beseeched the Lady of Manaoag in Pangasinan.

Velasco headed the 3-man team that arrested Lee as the importer with alleged ties to Malacañang stepped out of his plane at the airport that Sunday in March. Within an hour, Lee was in detention at the office of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Camp Crame.

Another police team had been tracking Lee's activities for months. The police had also infiltrated at least one of his companies.

Days before Lee's arrest, the police intercepted three container vans full of allegedly smuggled plastic resin on their way to Valenzuela City. The police said it was Lee who worked out their release.

Velasco said the P300,000 bribe offer was made just hours after Lee's arrest.

The officer said he and another policeman, a certain SPO1 Sia, were talking in his office when Lee, who was being held in another room, came in and asked to talk to him. The importer's relatives and counsel had arrived earlier.

He said Lee fished out something out from his pocket, and said: "Sir, it's money, P300,000."

'Insulted'

In exchange, Lee asked for a "small favor." He hoped the police would drop the charges against him.

But the man had miscalculated Velasco and Sia. What Lee got from the officers, instead, was a strong rebuke.

"I told him, 'Samuel Lee, ever since I joined the force, I never dreamed of accepting bribe money.' I told him right there and then that I was arresting him on [separate] charges of bribery," Velasco said, adding he was "insulted" by the offer.

They then took Lee to Supt. Benjamin de los Santos, the officer in charge of the police campaign to weed out smugglers at the Bureau of Customs. De los Santos instructed them to prepare bribery charges.

Uproar at CIDG

A prosecutor later recommended Lee's release pending "further investigation," a decision that caused uproar among CIDG officers.

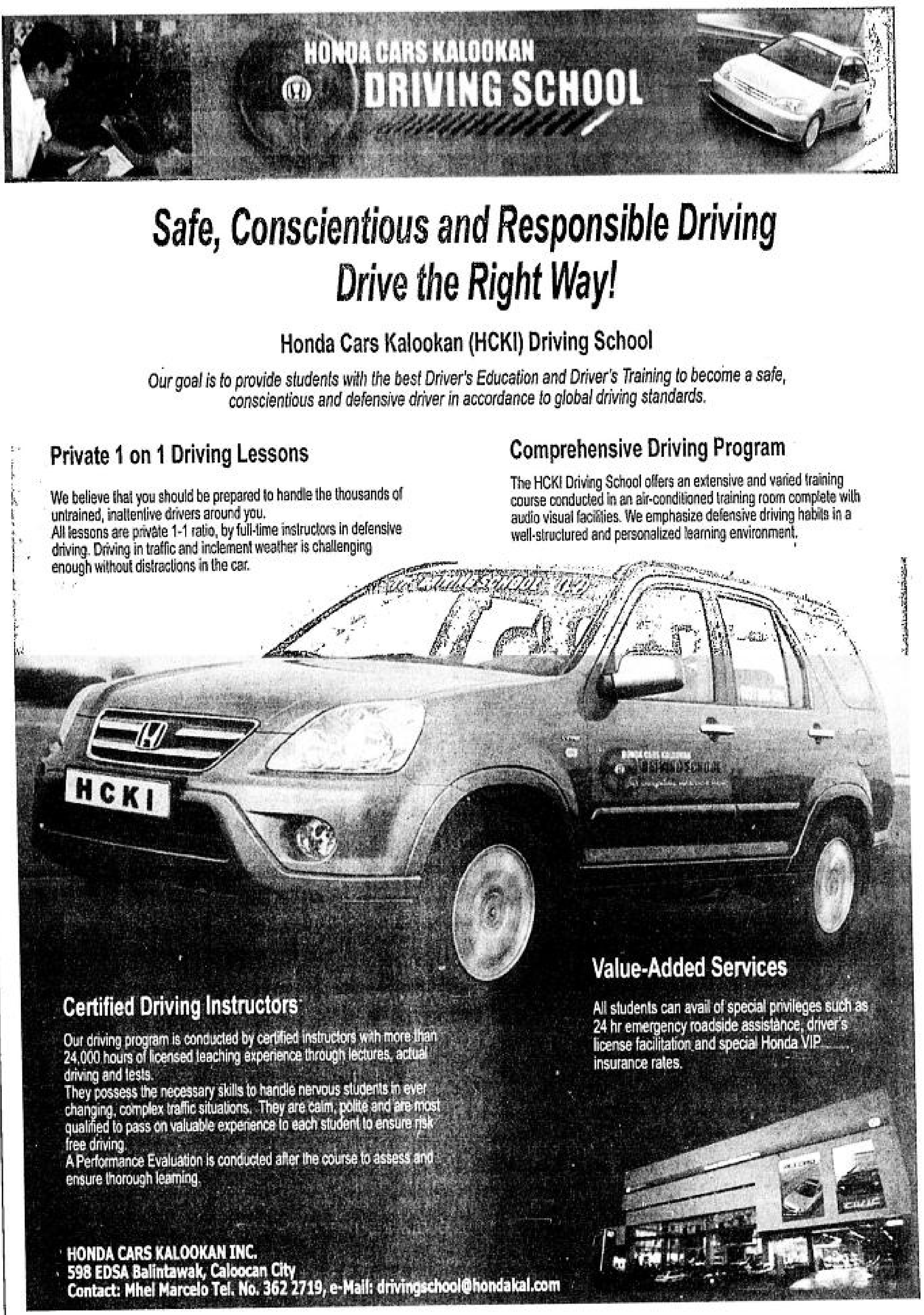
"How could the money come from me with my salary?" a bewildered Velasco, explaining the wads of P1,000 bills, reacted on learning of the prosecutor's recommendation.

After the CIDG protested, the prosecutor "corrected" her action by charging Lee with corruption of a public official.

For an organization perennially linked to corruption and some of whose members regularly top the list of human rights violators, Velasco's actions have lifted the spirits of other officers dreaming of a graft-free police force.

"That is what I want my children to be proud of—that ever since I joined the military and then the police, my work has been clean. Wherever they go, they can be proud of me."

He now eagerly looks forward to the day of his retirement: He plans to use the lump sum he'll get for his sons' weddings.



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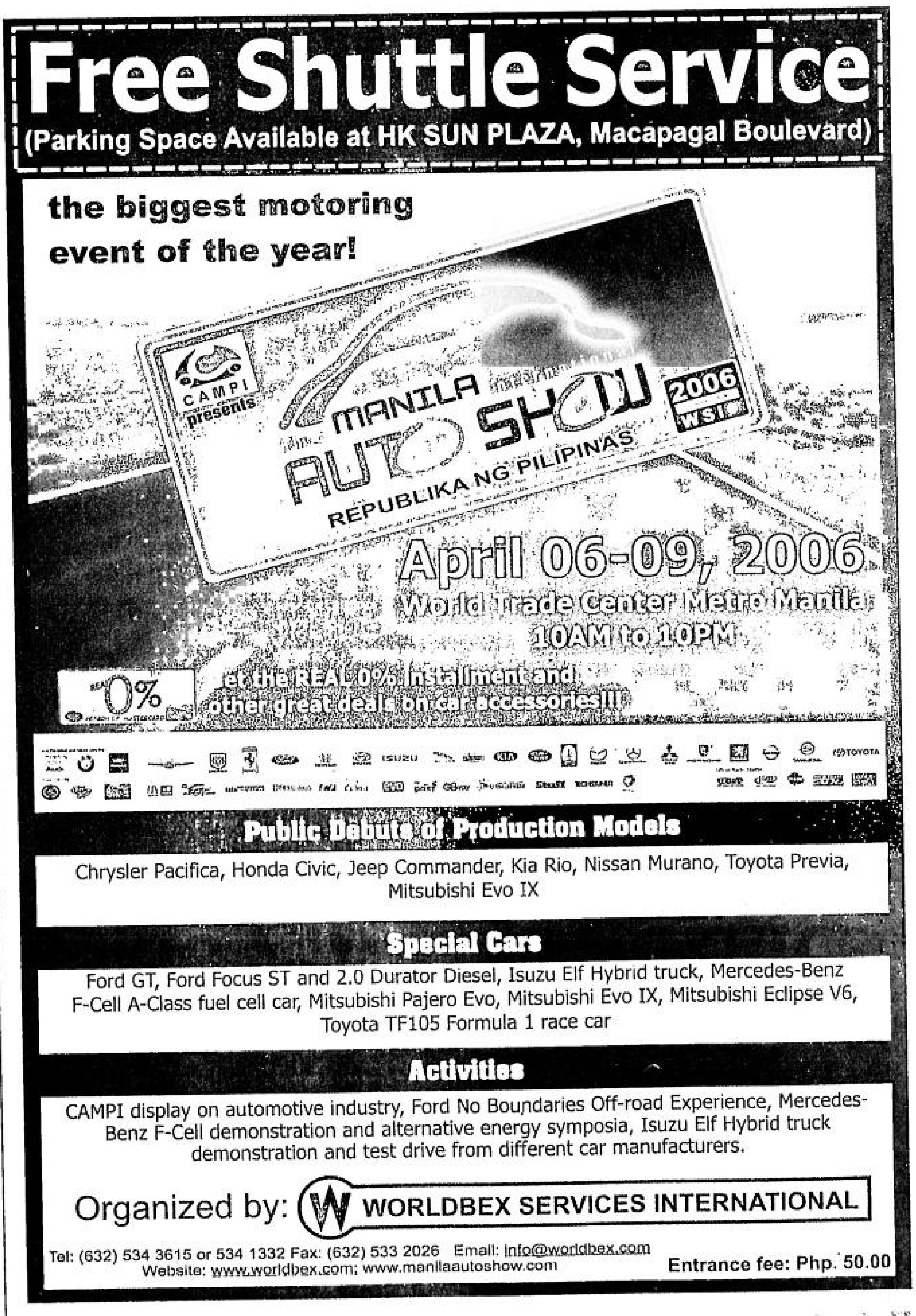

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GMA praises Mindoro investments, programs

CITY OF CALAPAN—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo expressed admiration for Oriental Mindoro's development program, praising its success in opening the province to investments in power and energy, tourism and its progress in antipoverty programs and agriculture.

Officials, led by Oriental Mindoro Gov. Arnan Panaligan and Rep. Rodolfo Valencia (1st District), welcomed Ms Arroyo.

She stopped by the Leido Memorial National High School and viewed the display booths for each town at the Land Bank of the Philippines.

The President particularly thanked Panaligan for his support on the economic agenda of her administration and on Charter change.

Ms Arroyo said Mindoro has great tourism potential when she stopped by the booth of Bulalacao, the southernmost town which displayed white beaches that can compete with Boracay's.

She said she was happy the province achieved political harmony even before investors issued a call for the holding of a summit. She also thanked the investors, particularly on power and energy, because of their goal to privatize these sectors.

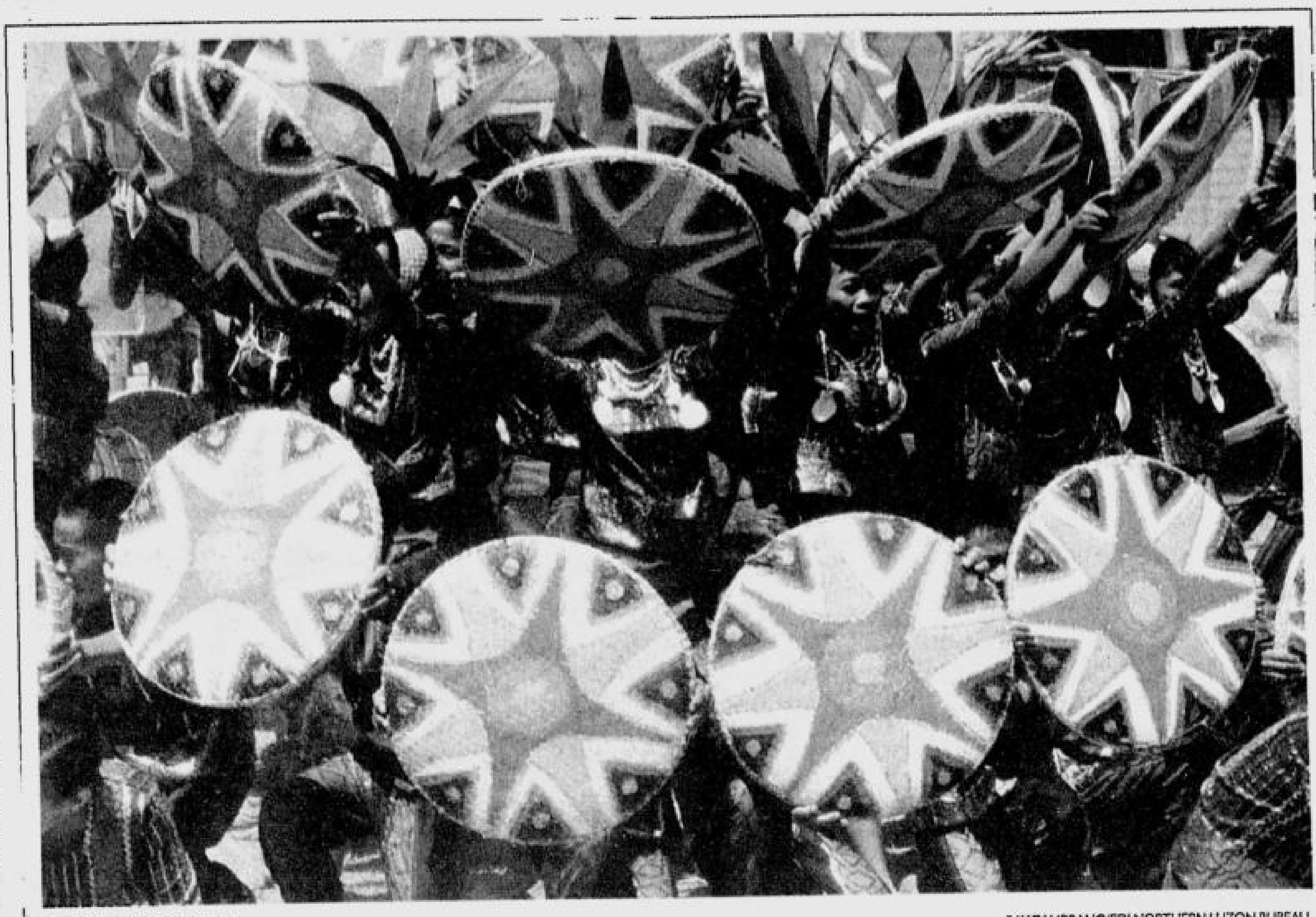
Ms Arroyo said Mindoro's Vision for 2020 to become an investment area like Clark, Subic, Davao and Cebu is not a far-fetched wish.

"We just have to improve the transportation infrastructure," she said.

Research on power and energy, tourism, agribusiness, logistics and infrastructure and social development highlighted the first Oriental Mindoro Investment Summit on April 5-7 here.

The summit was organized by the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P), provincial government officials and the Malampaya Joint Venture Partners, Panaligan, Valencia and Rep. Alfonso Umali of the second district.

Bernardo Villegas, UA&P senior vice president, earlier said a special feature of the summit is the special tour package of "Lakbay Mindoro" so participants can check on the investment climate, the potential investment sites for wind, geothermal and hydroelectric power plants and possible agribusiness and infrastructure ventures. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



RAY ZAMBRANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

PANDAN FEST

Boys and girls in costumes unveil the colors of the 4th Pandan Festival in Mapandan, Pangasinan. The town holds the festival in honor of the *pandan* leaf and its various uses that made the town known. The children and other participants competed in a street dance contest.

Angara: Snap polls could end crisis

BAGUIO CITY—WHERE OTHER ATTEMPTS TO oust President Macapagal-Arroyo through street rallies and impeachment have failed, a snap election could resolve questions on the legitimacy of her presidency, Sen. Edgardo Angara said here on Thursday.

"We've already tried all methods," he told a press briefing here. And a snap election is also a safeguard against a possible vacuum once the presidency is vacated, he said.

"We don't want it to be vacated and leave a vacuum. The void will be filled up by people with arms. They have the guns to implement their will," he said.

Angara expressed concern over the political confusion, saying the country's problems cannot be solved with hostility. He called on politicians to end their bickering for the good of the country.

"Lent is coming. God sacrificed his Son for us. Why can't politicians sacrifice their politics for a while for the sake of the country?" he asked.

He said the people's initiative to amend the Constitution is provided for in the Constitution and that questions regarding its validity and propriety should be left for the Supreme Court to decide.

He said the most significant aspect of Charter change deals not with the shift from presidential to parliamentary but with a shift in and decentralization of powers and control over resources.

He called this as the "restructuring of the relations between central and provincial governments."

"Everything depends on the central government with Manila controlling the structure," he said of the current government setup.

This suppression of autonomy and economy, according to him, is the root cause of underdevelopment.

"This is the kind of change that I would like to see in Charter change—the redistribution, resharing, reallocation of control, power and resources," he said.

Angara has stayed on the sidelines amid calls for Ms Arroyo to resign. His diaries were used by the Supreme Court to decide on the legality of the ouster of Ms Arroyo's predecessor, Joseph Estrada, who was ousted amid charges of plunder. *Donna Demetillo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Typhoid alert raised in 2 Isabela villages

ILAGAN, ISABELA—HEALTH OFFICIALS advised residents to boil water for drinking and to cook food well in the wake of reports that 100 typhoid fever cases were monitored in two villages here for the past two months.

Quoting a provincial epidemiological surveillance unit report, Dr. Purita Danga, regional health director, said 22 suspected typhoid cases were recorded in Barangay Baculod here last month.

Village officials said more than 100 cases were recorded from January to March this year. No fatality was reported.

Mayor Delfinito Albano, however, assured residents they had put up preventive measures to contain the outbreak.

Danga said the Center For Health Development-Cagayan Valley workers have also been watching Nagtipunan town in Quirino; Alfonso Castañeda town in Nueva Vizcaya and Baggao town in Cagayan for malaria.

Health officials distributed bottles of chlorine for deep wells and toilet bowls. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Army says NPA camp captured

DAVAO CITY—THE MILITARY SAID SOLDIERS captured a base camp of the New People's Army (NPA) in Paquibato District here on Thursday, killing at least 10 guerrillas in the process.

The city social welfare office reported that several civilians had fled because of the clash.

Maj. Jose Ma. Cuerpo, Army spokesperson for Southern Mindañao, said two soldiers from the 5th Scout Ranger Company were also killed in the clash that started 1:10 p.m.

Col. Francisco Simbajon, spokesperson of the Army's 4th Infantry Division in Cagayan de Oro City, said soldiers attacked the NPA camp in Sitio Dalag in Barangay Tapak after it was confirmed the rebels had set up camp there.

Davao City is under the jurisdiction of the 4th ID.

Simbajon said during the more than two hours of gunfight with about 50 rebels, the military also suffered two casualties.

The slain soldiers were identified as Cpl. Lloyd del Rosario and Pfc. Crisanto Tirador while those injured were identified as Cpl. Efren Sacatani and Pfc. Jesito Cadenas.

Simbajon said the soldiers also recovered munitions and documents.

He said none of the dead rebels had been recovered because their bodies were brought by their fleeing comrades.

"We have captured their base camp located in the mountain of Bayawa. Villagers saw fleeing rebels dragging their dead colleagues as they withdrew. We have enough soldiers in the area to fight them," Simbajon said.

Cuerpo said soldiers were still pursuing the fleeing rebels.

Paquibato, which is in the northern part of the city, is about an hour from the town center.

It is mainly populated by *lumad*.

Marilyn Agonia, city social welfare officer, said at least 702 families in Paquibato had already been displaced since February because of clashes between government forces and the rebels.

Hostilities between the government and the NPA appear to be increasing these past days. *Dennis Jay Santos and Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF DISPOSITION

The National Housing Authority is inviting *Offers to Purchase/Lease* on an *"As is - Where is"* basis, the following properties:

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	BASE PRICE
I. FIRST OFFERING			
LEASE			
001	1,500 square meter commercial lot. With existing gasoline station.	Along East Avenue corner NIA Road, Quezon City	PhP144.44/sq.m /mo. or PhP216,667/mo.
SALE			
002	2,000 square meter commercial lot. With title.	Phase VI-N Bagong Nayon II Antipolo City	PhP4,000/sq.m. or PhP8,000,000.00
003-007	5 commercial lots, 210 sq.m. each. With Titles.	Phase IV-C Bagong Nayon II	PhP4,400/sq.m. to PhP4,600/sq.m.
II. SECOND OFFERING			
LEASE			
008	343.06 commercial lot & bldg. with a floor area of 114 sq.m.	Phase II-A Karangalan Village Project, Pasig City	PhP11,823/mo.
009	863.57 sq.m. commercial lot	Block 140, Phase II Karangalan Village Project, Pasig City	PhP62.50/sq.m./mo. or PhP53,973.12
SALE			
010	541 sq.m. commercial lot with structure. With title.	Block 9, Maharlika Village Project, Taguig	PhP8,000/sq.m. (lot) PhP6,784.30 (structure)
011	306 sq.m. commercial lot, With technical descriptions	Phase X, Pckg. 6, Block 4 Bagong Silang Resettlement, Caloocan City	PhP2,700/sq.m.
III. A. NEGOTIATED SALE			
012-031	20 commercial lots. Lot areas ranging from 192 to 1,113 sq.m. With titles.	Phase III-E, VI-C & VI-N Bagong Nayon II, Antipolo	PhP3,500/sq.m. to PhP4,600/sq.m.
032-033	2 commercial lots, 200 sq.m. & 248 sq.m. With titles.	Phase VI-S Bagong Nayon II, Antipolo	PhP3,500/sq.m.
034	1,113 sq.m. commercial lot. With title.	Towerville Resettlement Project, San Jose del Monte City	PhP3,000/sq.m. or PhP3,339,000.00
035-043	9 commercial lots, lot areas ranging from 240 to 414 sq.m. With titles.	Towerville Resettlement Project, San Jose del Monte City	PhP3,000/sq.m. PhP3,250/sq.m.
044-057	14 commercial lots lot areas ranging from 50 to 63 sq.m. With titles.	Phase IV Towerville Resettlement Project, San Jose Del Monte City	PhP2,475/sq.m. to PhP2,500/sq.m.
058-081	24 commercial lots. Lot areas ranging from 240 to 324 sq.m With titles.	Mayon Vista Hills Subd. Brgy. Tuburan, Ligao, Albay	PhP1,540/sq.m. PhP1,700/sq.m
082-085	4 commercial lots. Lot areas ranging 74 to 295 sq.m. With technical descriptons	Mayon Vista Hills Subd Tuburan, Ligao City, Albay	PhP1,600/sq.m. to PhP1,785/sq.m.
086	312 sq.m. commercial lot With title.	Brgy. Bulua Cagayan de Oro City	PhP1,500/sq.m. or PhP468,000.00
B. NEGOTIATED SALE OR LEASE			
087-285	199 commercial lots, lot areas ranging from 170 to 287 sq.m. With titles.	Pampanga Hsg. Project Pandacaqui, Telepayong Mexico, Arayat	Sale: PhP1,600/sq.m. to PhP1,800/sq.m. Lease PhP6.67 to PhP7.50/sq.m./mo.

TERMS:

For properties for lease, a minimum of two (2) months deposit and one (1) month advance shall be tendered on the date of bidding. Lease period shall be for a maximum of fifteen (15) years renewable for another five (5) years at the option of NHA. A Five Percent (5%) escalation rate shall be imposed beginning on the 2nd year of lease and every year thereafter.

For properties for sale, a minimum of Ten Percent (10%) deposit shall be tendered on the date of bidding. Options for repayment period *are Cash, Modified Cash* (Six (6) equal installments without interest) or *Installment* for a maximum period of *Ten (10) years* with graduated interest rates.

Bidding Materials can be secured for a non-refundable fee of PhP200.00 from the *Commercial/Industrial Bids & Awards Committee (COINBAC) c/o the Commercial & Industrial Estates Department (CIED),* Second Floor, NHA Main Bldg. Elliptical Road, Quezon City. Bidding Materials can also be secured from the following Project Offices:

Details on lots for negotiated sale or lease may be secured from the respective Project Offices where the properties are located or at CIED, NHA on the following working day from first publication of this Notice of Disposition.

For further inquiry, please contact *Ms. Evelyn V. Ramos/Neri A. Subido* at the following Tel. Nos. of *CIED. (02) 922-3002, (02) 928-4561 local 263 & 264;*

SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC BIDDING		EASE AVENUE KARANGALAN/ BAGONG SILANG/MAHARLIKA, TAGUIG
A.	*Submission of Pre-Qualification Requirements/ Evaluation/Issuance of Bidding Forms*	April 11 to 21, 2006, Office Hours, CIED, 2nd Floor, NHA Main Office Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City
B.	*Pre-Bid Conference*	April 18, 2006, 3:00 p.m Operations Center, 3rd Floor, NHA Main Office
C.	*Submission of Sealed Bids*	April 26, 2006, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Operations Center
D.	*Opening of Sealed Bids*	April 26, 2006, 1:30 p.m. Operations Center

The AUTHORITY reserves the right to *reject* any or all offers or any part thereof or to *waive* any required formalities and *accept* offers most advantageous to the interest of NHA.

(Sgd.) FEDERICO A. LAXA
General Manager

(PDI - April 8 & 16, 2006)

Office of the President
BCDA
Bases Conversion and Development Authority

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
Republic of the Philippines

Re-Bidding for Construction of 10th and 11th Avenues of Bonifacio Triangle Project
Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City

The Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), through the BCDA 2006 Corporate Funds intends to apply the sum of **Pesos: Fifty-five Million Seventy Thousand Six Hundred Twenty-Three & 77/100 (P55,070,623.77)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under Contract for the Construction of 10th and 11th Avenues of Bonifacio Triangle Project. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Services shall be for the Construction of 10th and 11th Avenues of Bonifacio Triangle, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. The works shall include, but not limited to the following:

1. Road Works, including Sidewalk, Curbs and Gutters.
2. Water, Sewer and Drainage Systems.
3. 34.5 KV Underground Distribution System.
4. Streetlighting (Ducts and Fixtures) and
5. Streetscape.

BCDA now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the Re-bidding for Construction of the aforecited Project. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract (at least **Medium B Range License Category A**), have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Applicants must submit their LOIs from **17 to 18 April 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** only and obtain the Application for Eligibility to Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Twelve Thousand (P12,000.00)** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. **Previous Applicants for the eligibility of the Project must submit anew their LOIs and present their proof of payment for them to be issued a new set of Eligibility Documents.** Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents **26 April 2006 at 11:00 a.m. and the Opening at 1:30 p.m.** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (RA 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC for Infrastructure Secretariat at BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City Taguig City on or before **26 April 2006 at 11:00 am**.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from BCDA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from **9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on 05 to 08 May 2006**.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC-B Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos Thirty Thousand (P30,000.00)**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the Bidder or his authorized representative from **9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on 05 to 08 May 2006**.

BCDA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference and Site Inspection open to all Eligible Bidders on **15 May 2006 at 1:30 p.m.** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City.

Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before **07 June 2006 at 11:00 a.m.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form:

a. Cash, managers check, cashiers' check, irrevocable letter of credit, or bank draft – one percent (1%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract
b. Bank Guarantee – one and a half percent (1½ %) of the Approved Budget for the Contract
c. Surety Bond from a reputable insurance company accredited by the Insurance Commission – two and a half percent (2½ %) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.

Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on **07 June 2006 at 1:30 p.m.** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below on the same day.

Completion of the Works is required by a total of **One Hundred Twenty (120) calendar days**

BCDA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Further information may be obtained from Mr. Samuel John L. Vidalion, Head of BAC Secretariat for Infrastructure.

BASES CONVERSION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St.
Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City
Telephone Number (632) 816-6666 Telfax No. (632) 816-0996
Website: www.bcda.gov.ph

(Sgd.) ANTONIO REX S. CHAN
Chairman
BAC for Infrastructure

(PDI--April 8 & 16, 2006)

E-mail: inq_cebu@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER *Visayas*

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

Pilgrimage traditions in Guimaras

By Jo Martinez-Clemente
Jordan, Guimaras

FROM the amphitheater to the streets, Jesus carries his cross followed by the crowd who now becomes part of the cast. JO CLEMENTE

EVEN THOSE FROM FARaway Finland have come to Guimaras Island on a Holy Week.

Last year, Timo Sahja and Sonja Malinen, psychiatric nurses from the Scandinavian country, set out to explore Southeast Asia and made sure that they watched the passion play, "Ang Pagtaltal," as well as do the Stations of the Cross on the Balaan Bukid, in Jordan, the capital town of Guimaras.

They say they learned about the events from the website of the "Lonely Planet."

Balaan Bukid is Ilonggo for "Holy Mountain," while "Pagtaltal," another Ilonggo word, means "to remove." In the context of the Lenten play, the terms mean "removing the body of Christ from the Cross."

This season, "Ang Pagtaltal" runs its 31st year, while Balaan Bukid marks 51 years as a pilgrim site.

Do miracles happen in Balaan Bukid?

Jordan parish priest Jose Manuel Escanlar says the Roman Catholic Church has yet to receive any document or information of miracle claims for investigation or study. Even so, Escanlar says "the silent conversion of a people enlightened by their pilgrimages to the shrine who are now enjoying the fruits of their conversion is the modern-day miracle."

"And I pray that there will be more miracles of this kind," he says.

Mang Quiling

"Ang Pagtaltal," a community endeavor that tells the story of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, made its debut in 1979. The stage play was conceptualized, written and directed by Aquilino Secuzana, locally known as Mang Quiling.

Secuzana says the maiden presentation was a mime—no dialogues, just simple acting. "It was a success and the people liked it so that the following year, we improved on it and started to put in the dialogues and the costumes."

Through the years, play performance evolved. Technology and the influx of foreign visitors prompted the organizers to pre-tape dialogues in the vernacular but with English translations flashed on a wide screen.

The cast includes ordinary residents—tricycle drivers, policemen, housewives and farmers. In contrast, the audience has top honchos of the government and private corporations, and diplomats.

What sets "Ang Pagtaltal" apart from other passion plays presented across the country?

In Jordan, a pilgrim or plain tourist is moved back in time. For one, the actors wear Roman costumes that match the island's ambience.

From the amphitheater, where the play is staged, the actors and the spectators move to the streets, following Christ as he carries his cross to a hill. The Roman guards who line the streets are led by a soldier on horseback.

Mt. Golgotha is a mound now fenced and maintained by the municipal government for the yearly event. And when Christ is put on the cross between two thieves in that mound, the scene is picture perfect.

Despite the hordes of people that follow the play to the hill, silence reigns. The people solemnly watch, pray and remember that Good Friday when Jesus died.

Balaan Bukid

On Thursday afternoon or earlier, pilgrims and islanders follow the Stations of the Cross through Balaan Bukid.

There are two routes to the place. One is the original path taken by Mill Hill priest, Rev. Fr. Bargil Pixner, OSB, and Crisogono Domingo when they first searched the area 51 years ago to look for a site to shelter a statue of Mary and the Child Jesus.

From a boat in the Bongolan Bay, the pilgrims trek up the mountains, passing by the Stations of the Cross and their life-size statues. The original installations were made by patients of a leprosarium in Sta. Barbara, Iloilo where Pixner served as chaplain. They were later replaced by another set coming from Spain.

The other way is a one-hour trek from the heart of Barangay Balcon Melliza. Climbing is less tedious as the mountain slopes are not as steep. The Stations of the Cross are simple, laminated color pictures mounted on huge trees or stonewalls.

There are concrete pews to kneel on. Some portions of the route are lined with *calachuchi* trees, which are abloom with fragrant white flowers this time of the year.

On top of the Balaan Bukid is the Ave Maria Shrine.

According to one account, the Holy Week tradition arose from a "*panaad*" or promise made by Domingo when he and his wife Candelaria, together with some leprosy patients, fled from Japanese forces to Panay during World War II.

The Japanese learned about their escape and started shooting the lepers. It was then that Crisogono made the promise to Mary to give her a gift if they survived.

After the war, Domingo sought out Pixner to help him fulfill his promise. The priest suggested that since he had a natural flair for the arts, he should carve a statue of Mary with a Child.

Crisogono first made a small statue model, which, according to the story, was brought to the Mill Hill House at Slingerlands in Albany, New York by Pixner. The bigger statue was later produced and blessed by the Spanish Cardinal Quiroga, who was then visiting the Diocese of Jaro.

Then Jaro Archbishop Jose Ma. Cuenco issued a decree declaring May 1 as "Pilgrimage Day" to Balaan Bukid. In time though, the site has became a pilgrimage destination during Holy Week.

When Guimaras became a separate province, the care of the shrine was entrusted to the Jordan parish.

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P 1,833.25
12 MOS @ 0% INTEREST
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SRP: 24,999
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- 4x Optical Zoom
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SRP: 19,950
P 1,662.50
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- 2.0" (5.1cm) LCD Screen

SRP: 24,950
P 2,079.17
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BUGARIN

Court orders seizure of assets of ex- NBI chief

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN THIRD DIVISION ORdered on Thursday the seizure of eight real estate properties owned by the late former National Bureau of Investigation director Jolly Bugarin.

Ordered seized were nine residential lots in Tagaytay City, two house and lots in Greenhills, San Juan; a residential lot in Capitol District, Quezon City; two residential lots in Valle Verde, Pasig City; Orchard and Cocoland Streets in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro; and a residential lot in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro.

The antigraft court issued a writ of execution based on a 2002 Supreme Court ruling that declared Bugarin's assets as ill-gotten.

Also ordered forfeited in favor of the government were Bugarin's shares in the Makati Sports Club and the Manila Polo Club, which he acquired in 1975 and 1978.

The Sandiganbayan directed its sheriff, Edgardo Urieta, to effect the forfeiture of the properties and coordinate with the Register of Deeds to transfer immediately their titles in favor of the government.

In a separate resolution, the court noted that several of the subject properties were already in the names of Bugarin's relatives after his death but said the right of the State to recover ill-gotten wealth would be given primacy because it is "a higher right."

The government almost lost the case in 1991 after the Sandiganbayan dismissed the lawsuit against Bugarin after the latter presented several documents proving his sources of income to support his claim over the questioned properties.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government elevated the case to the Supreme Court, which overturned the Sandiganbayan decision, voting 8-2 with five abstentions.

The SC noted that among the sources of income submitted by Bugarin were rentals from his houses in Makati, Pasig and San Juan but these were for the years 1981 to 1986.

The forfeited properties were acquired between 1968 and 1980 hence, the High Court pointed out, the house rentals could not have been part of the funds used in their purchase.

In fact, it said that Bugarin's disposable income between 1968 and 1980 only amounted to P766,548 but he acquired real estate properties and made investments worth P2,170,163.

LOTTO RESULT

EZ2
17 30

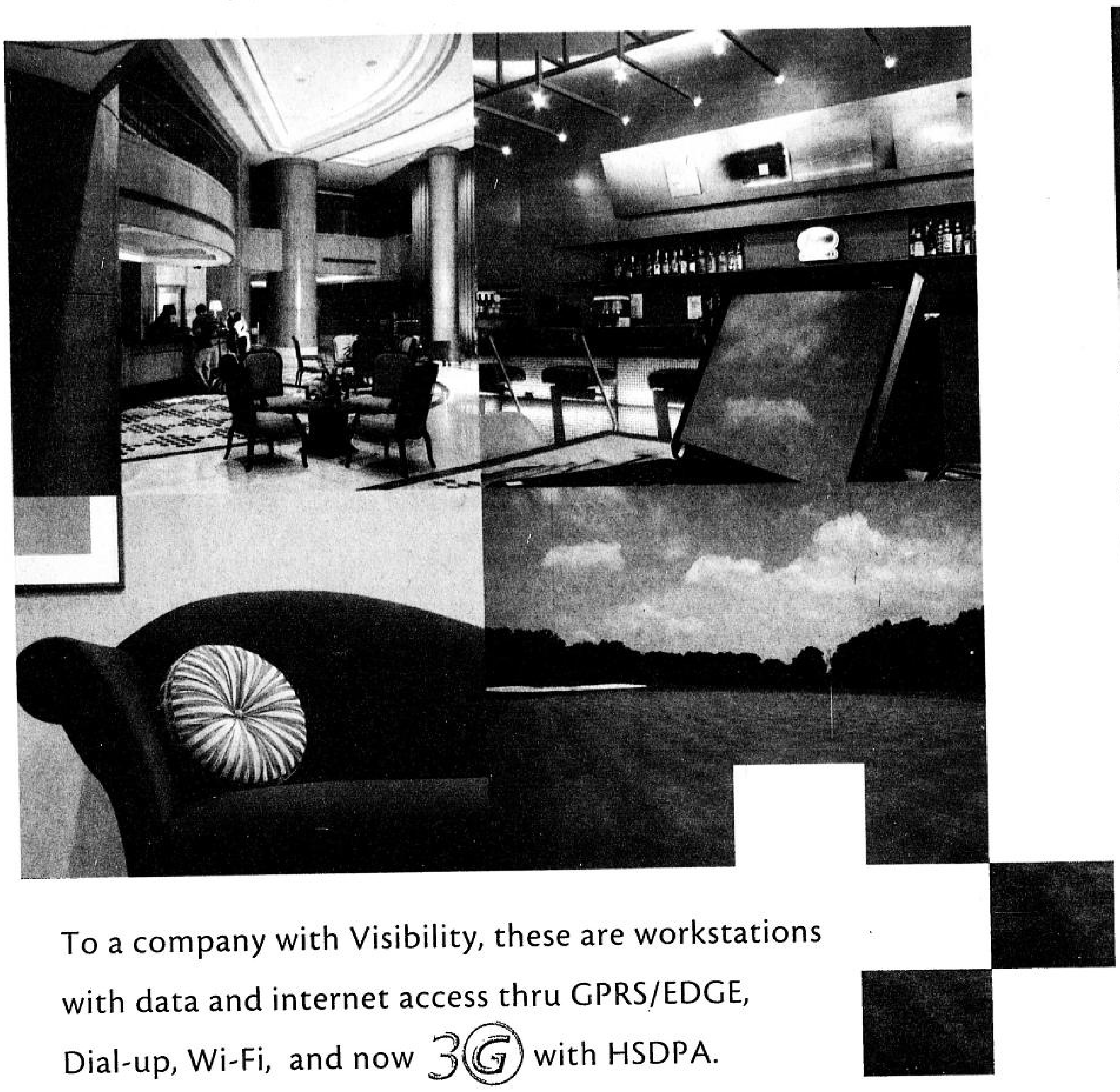
SUERTRES
6 0 0

FOUR DIGIT
4 2 8 1

(Result above in exact order)

MEGALOTTO 6/45
15 26 35 38 41 42

₱5,342,553.00



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WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Trader escapes being crushed to death by huge tree branch** /A22

- **Barangay official shot dead in Malabon** /A22

- **Fire volunteers tell their stories in interactive exhibit** /A23

Graft charges filed vs QC congresswoman

REP. Castelo-Daza

Public funds used for helpers' wages, says complainant

By Nelson F. Flores and Michael L. Ubac

A FORMER EMPLOYEE OF QUEZON City Rep. Nanette Castelo-Daza yesterday accused her of graft, malversation of public funds and falsification of public documents in the Office of the Ombudsman.

Richell Vineles, in a seven-page complaint-affidavit, claimed that Daza, "with full knowledge and consent," had been using public funds to pay the salaries of her house help and other employees working in her pizza parlor.

Also included in the charge sheet were Melencio Castelo Jr., Daza's brother and chief of staff; Evangeline Abrigonda, Daza's personal secretary and trusted aide; some officials of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), several John Does and 18 other individuals who allegedly work for Daza in a private capacity.

The 18 were identified as Rey Tagudando, Danilo dela Torre, Norwina Sanchez, Michael Bilaya, Maxie Fernandez, Danilo Martinez, Olive Gabriel, Sancho Baluyot, Josie Gonzales, Daisy Laberosa, Angelina Peciller, Catalina Guillermo, Ruben Aban, Godofredo Tallud, Mary Ann Saco, Ramirez dela Cruz, Francis Pallen and Ligaya Sales. According to Vineles, some of them work in Daza's pizza parlor.

Daza denied the charges and told the INQUIRER that her lawyer was already preparing her defense. "Of course, I deny the charges," she said.

GRAFT/ A23

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ISUZU PHILIPPINES CORPORATION

Barangay official shot dead

By Nancy C. Carvajal

NORTHERN POLICE DISTRICT DIRECtor Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil yesterday created a task force to look for the men who killed a barangay official in Catmon, Malabon City.

Barangay executive officer Wilfredo Bombio, 45, of 141 Hernandez Street in Catmon, was shot in front of the barangay hall on Thursday.

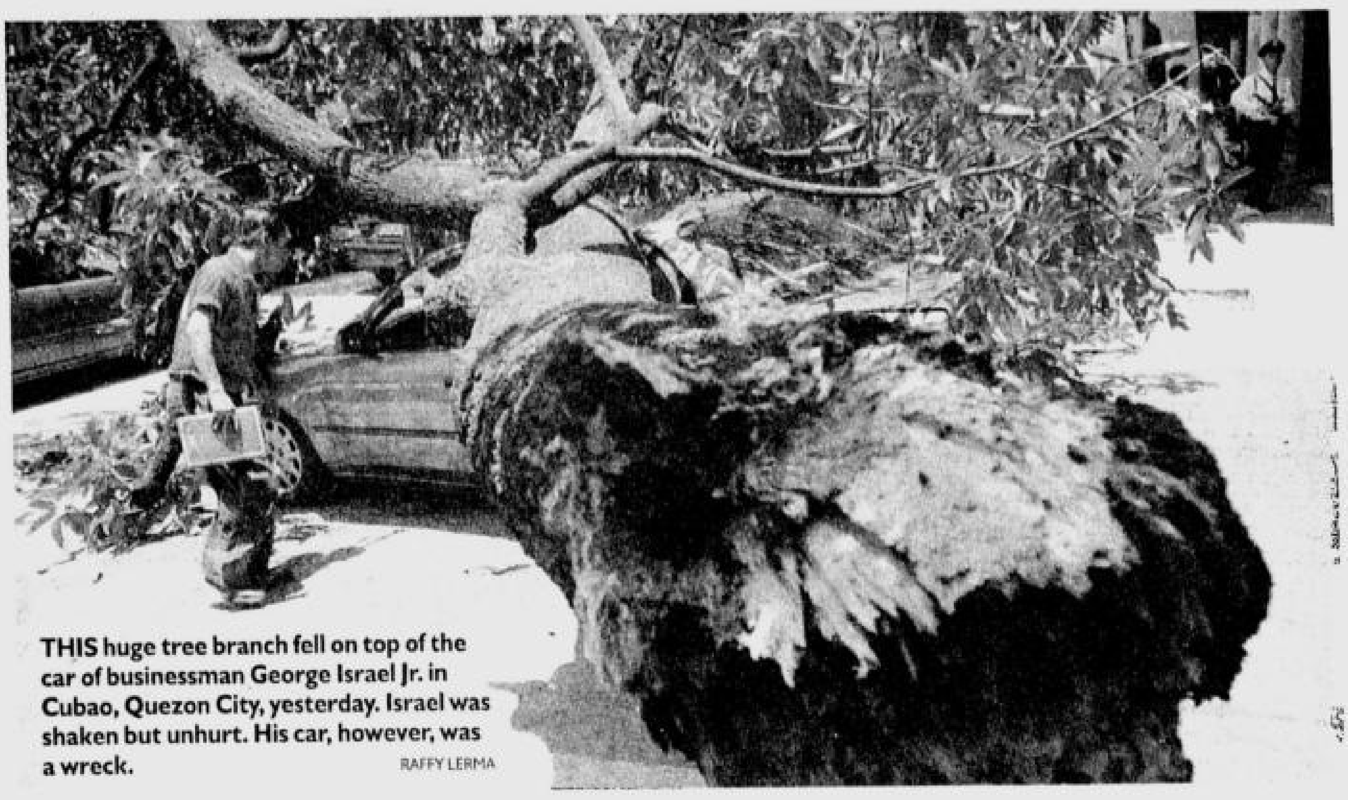
A barangay tanod, Efren Noya, was wounded after a stray bullet hit him in the belly. The police said Noya was in critical condition in a hospital.

According to the police, the two men were seated on a bench in front of the barangay hall when two unidentified men on board a motorcycle fired at them. Bombio was declared dead on arrival at the Pagamutan ng Bayan sa Malabon due to gunshot wounds in the neck.

Nine empty shells from a gun were recovered at the scene. Witnesses said the suspects fired shots into the air before leaving.

According to the police, Bombio had been receiving death threats from relatives of holdup and robbery suspects who were arrested with his help. The victim, however, ignored the threats. "He was true to his job and he was also brave," the police added.

Five months ago, a grenade was hurled at the barangay hall but it did not explode.



THIS huge tree branch fell on top of the car of businessman George Israel Jr. in Cubao, Quezon City, yesterday. Israel was shaken but unhurt. His car, however, was a wreck. RAFFY LERMA

Trader alive in freak accident

By DJ Yap

A BUSINESSMEN MISSED BEING killed or seriously injured yesterday when a massive tree branch fell on the roof of his car in Cubao, Quezon City.

George Israel Jr., 28, was cruising along Dona Juana Rodriguez corner First Street in Barangay Valencia aboard a Toyota Corolla at past 10 a.m. when he saw the branch of a mango tree hurtling toward him.

He only had a moment to duck before the branch, 10-feet-long and almost as thick as a man's waist, crashed on top of the car, missing him by inches, said SPO2 Crisanto Labrado.

Israel was pulled out of the car, shaken but in one piece. He sustained only scratches in the hands and arms, Labrado said.

Total wreck

His gray Toyota, with plate number TGL-124, was a total wreck, and a chain saw was needed to remove the tree branch from the car top.

Israel told police he was still in a state of shock, but was relieved to be alive. The wind was blowing fiercely that morning when the branch came crashing in the direction of Israel's car, Labrado said.

The branches of the almost 30-foot mango tree had been some cut off by Manila Electric Company linesmen on one side, but the branch in question apparently fell off by itself, he added.

With Melissa de Quiros, trainee

An unsolicited advice to Jinggoy

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE INFLUENTIAL RELIGIOUS sect Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) is being dragged into the mud by its members in the government service who invoke the name of the church when they get into trouble.

Supt. Jerry Valeroso, allegedly a problem cop, can't be kicked out of the service by his superiors because he is an INC member.

Valeroso has a string of criminal records. In 1997, he was convicted of car theft, extortion and illegal possession of a firearm. But he didn't serve time at the National Penitentiary allegedly because an INC minister allegedly interceded for him.

He was a chief inspector (major) when he got kicked out of the service after his conviction. But he was able to get back in and even got promoted to superintendent (lieutenant colonel).

Valeroso is a recidivist. Now, he is charged with car theft again. The complainant this time is a Muslim, Jaime "Lindi" Amer.

Amer said Valeroso forced him and his wife to sign a blank piece of paper while he was being tortured inside Valeroso's office at the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO).

His signature and his wife's, Amer said, became an absolute deed of sale that showed he supposedly sold his car, a Toyota Revo, to a certain Ferdy S. Gutierrez.

Another INC member who's reportedly untouchable is Collector Carlos "Ding" So of the Manila International Container Port. His superiors at the Bureau of Customs couldn't touch him with a ten-foot pole.

So was supposed to have been relieved from his post for falling short of his collection target. But when he allegedly invoked his membership in the INC, he was reinstated immediately.

I'm sure INC Chief Minister Erano "Ka Erdie" Manalo doesn't know that the church founded by his father, Felix, is being used in vain by some members.

* * *

The reshuffle ordered recently by Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales isn't pushing through because many of those affected can't be touched. Chief among them are So and Cebu Port Collector Lourdes Mangaoang.

If the others are reassigned while So and Mangaoang are not, that will cause low morale at customs.

Therefore, the revamp is held in abeyance indefinitely.

* * *

The scuttlebutt at customs is that a high official at the Department of Finance is having a big quarrel with his wife because he is allegedly consorting with a subordinate.

The finance official is so enamored of the subordinate he has made her a prima donna in her turf. The wife learned about the affair and is naturally enraged.

Hasn't that official heard about that age-old injunction not to make a mess in one's own backyard?

* * *

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada's collapse during the graduation rites at the Philippine Normal University in Alicia, Isabela should be a wake-up call for the favorite son and poor look-alike of deposed President Erap.

It's none of my business, but his body was telling him to stop abusing it. I heard from his friends he goes out drinking and gambling with his buddies every night till the wee hours of the morning. The young senator also has an enormous appetite and it shows in his corpulent physique.

Magbago ka na, sir, dahil baka di ka tumagal sa ginagawa mo.

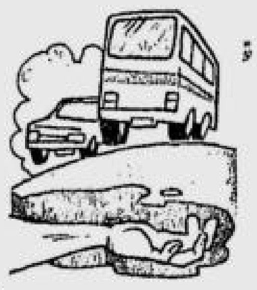
As your fan, I'm worried. Hence, this piece of unsolicited advice.

METROBRIEFS

Birthday blues

AN elderly man was killed after he allegedly jumped off the steel railings on Edsa in Mandaluyong City, and fell into the Crossing Underpass early yesterday morning. The impact alone could have killed him, but his body was also ran over by a truck, a bus, and a few other vehicles, witnesses said. Police remain baffled by what could have motivated the victim, later identified as 68-year-old Pepito Ignite, to kill himself a day before his birthday. Witnesses told the police they saw Ignite climb up the steel railings in the middle of the intersection at the corner of Shaw Boulevard and Edsa in Mandaluyong City at about 1:45 a.m. yesterday, before jumping into the underpass. Policemen identified him through a community tax certificate found on him. According to the certificate, Ignite was a resident of Riverside Subdivision in Cainta, Rizal.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.



Probe into teacher's slay

THE TAGUIG City government yesterday ordered the police to conduct a thorough investigation into the killing of a public high school teacher. Teodulo Gonzales, 45, a technological livelihood education instructor at the Taguig National High School, was shot on Thursday by two unidentified men after he boarded a tricycle on Mariano Street, Purok 3 in Barangay Lower Bicutan. Gonzales died on the spot of gunshot wounds in the chest and thighs, case investigator P03 Alain Sigua said. The victim, whom colleagues described as a good-natured man, had just left the school and was on his way home to Cavite when the incident happened. Police have ruled out robbery since the victim's personal belongings and valuables were intact. "We call on witnesses to come forward or call our Anti-Crime Hotline at 640-2222 to help unmask the people behind this cowardly act so they can be punished," Mayor Freddie Tinga said in a statement.

Jocelyn R. Uy and Melody Asuque, trainee

Cops to guard churches

THE MANILA Police District will deploy more policemen in areas near places of worship to ensure the safety of people who are expected to flock to churches tomorrow to observe Palm Sunday. The policemen will be assisted by K-9 units and traffic enforcers, said MPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong. Apart from churches, Bulaong said he also ordered his men to guard vital installations like the Light Rail Transit stations, bus depots, shopping malls as well as shipping lines in the North and South harbors. Members of the Special Weapons and Tactics squad will also be deployed to secure public areas.

Tina G. Santos

Vicente Marasigan; 54

VICENTE Garcia Marasigan Jr. passed away on April 6 at the age of 54. He is survived by his wife Rose, children Joy, Khristine and Roy and other family members. His wake will be held at the Divine Mercy Chapel in Tunasan, Muntinlupa City. A Mass will be offered at the chapel at noon before his interment on Sunday at the Everest Hills Memorial Park, Susana Heights, Muntinlupa City.. Marasigan was president and CEO of Ad Options Unlimited Inc. and president of the Rotary International San Pedro Chapter.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Saturday, April 8, 2006

Sayaw. Drama. Iba.
Shall We Dance?
The Celebrity Dance Challenge
Sunday 9 PM
hosted by Lucy Torres Gomez
ABC
Iba Tayo!

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	Kid's TV	KNN	Anime Ring' Kaisho		PBA					Wow Maling Mali		Ripley's Believe It or Not		ABCinema					
ABS-CBN 2	ETK				Little Big Star		Komiks			Quizon Avenue		TV Patrol World	XXX		Pinoy Big Brother	Sabado Movie Greats			
AXN		Kung Fu Hustle Special				Worst Case Scenario		WRC 2006: Rally XS	E Buzz	The 4400 (Season 2)		The Amazing Race (Season IX)		Lost (Season II)		Girlfight			
Cartoon Network	Powerpuff Girls	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	Pet Alien	Tom & Jerry Show	The Life & Times Of Juniper Lee	Xiaolin Showdown	Teen Titans	Justice League Unlimited	The Batman	Yogi's Great Escape			The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Battle B-Daman	The Gransazers	Loonatics Unleashed	The Batman	Justice League Unlimited	Aqua Teen Hunger Force/Sealab 2021
Cinema One	Sabel				Feng Shui			Three Way	My Movie				Bridesmaids				Father Of Mercy		
Cinemax	Gargoyle's Revenge (2:25 PM)			Introducing Dorothy Dandridge A True Story							Wild Things 2: The Glades			Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines			Devil Winds (10:45PM)		
CNN		World News	CNN Business Traveller	World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	World News	Revealed	World News	World Sport	World News	CNN Business Traveller	CNN Presents		Talk Asia	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart
Crime/Suspense	Forensic Files	Bones		Profiler		North Mission Road	Body Of Evidence	Crossing Jordan		Surface		Bones		Prison Break					
Disney Channel	Lizzie McGuire	Totally Spies-Double Episodes		Brandy & Mr. Whiskers	Lilo & Stitch	Buzz on Maggie	Mr. Bean	Phil Of The Future	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Mr. Bean	America's Funniest Home Video	Kim Possible	Martin Mystery	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN				Women's Pro Billiards '06 WPBA Carolina Classic Semis		LPGA Golf Kraft Nabisco C'ship 3rd rd				Pool Snooker World Pool Masters '03 Holland		Pool Snooker Mosconi Cup 2003		Table Tennis '04 Invitational C'ships	NBA Game Lakers @ Suns				
ETC		Joan Of Arcadia		Friends 10	Will & Grace 4	Veronica Mars 2		The O.C. 2		Beauty & The Geek		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Saturday Night Live		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Visionaries, Mystics & Stigmatists	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Image Of God	Adventures In Odyssey	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Knights Of St. Michael	Catholic Compass		Life Is Worth Living	The World Over Encore		Daily Mass Live		Angelus (9:15 PM)	The Word Was Made Flesh	Voices On Virtue	Backstage	Life on The Rock Encore	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Special Report With Brit Hume		Fox & Friends Saturday						Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business
GMA 7	Startalk			Wish Ko Lang		Wag Kukurap	Pinoy Pop Superstar		Bitoy's Funniest Videos Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho		Imbestigador		Hokus Pocus			Showbiz Stripped			
Hallmark Channel	Ladies Man	Ladies Man																	
HBO	Rome Ep 03: An Owl In A Thornbush		Sgt. Bilko			Beyond Borders				McHale's Navy (7:15 PM)				Are We There Yet?			Deadwood 16 Requiem For A Gleet		The Glimmer Man (11:25PM)
Hero TV	Mon Colle Knights	Shaider	Mask Rider Ryuki	Gransazers	Shaman King	Bucky the Incredible	Jester The Adventurer	Musumet	The X-Treme Team	Love Hina	Fruits Basket	Lost Universe	Hero TV Theatrebox	Babel II	II OVA	Captain Kuppa	Mon Colle Knights	Shaider	Mask Rider Ryuki
IBC 13		Home Shopping Network		[illegible]	Auto Review	Home Shopping Network		Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Global Family Series		Japan Video Topics		Bitag		Philippine Sabong Sports	Japan Video Topics	Cue Masters	
JackTV	X-Men	JLU.	The Batman	Cheat	Filter	Bottomline		Raw				Distraction	Banzai	Mad TV		South Park	South Park	Drawn Together	Crank Yankers
Lifestyle Network	Carol Duvall	HGTV Special		Sheila Bridges: Designer Living	Radical Sabbatical	Simply Wine With Andrea Immer	Food Fight	Date Plate	Emeril Live		Iron Chef America		Merge		NY Fashion Week	How Do I Look		E! Extra Celebrity Adventures	
MTV Philippines						Take 5		Top Of The Pops											
MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Bandarito	MYX News	MYX Presents			Radio MYX		Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Live!		Pinoy MYX Countdown				MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic		Strange Days On Planet Earth		No Borders				Be The Creature		Built For The Kill		Hidden Worlds		Terrorism Week				No Borders	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alas		Kamao		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)		Talk To Harry		GSIS Member's Hour		Isla Hour On NBN		Talk Ko 'To		Krusada Kontra Krimen	
Nickelodeon	Drake & Josh	SpongeBob SquarePants	Trollz	The Fairly Odd Parents	Catscratch	Avatar: The Last Airbender	Danny Phantom	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	Dark Oracle	Unfabulous	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	As Told By Ginger	Girls In Love	The Brothers Garcia	The Amanda Show	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Mokong Astig At Gamol				Tubusin Mo Ng Buhay				Nandito Ako				Swindler's List			Groupee TV	Ang Galing-Galing Mo Babes
Qtv		Kiddy Grade		The Prince Of Tennis		Candies		Pans Kita		Ayll Robot		Day-Off		Sabado Showdown					
RPN 9		Global Window		Biyaheng Langit	Kids TV	Man & Machine		Global Window		Medical Investigation		CSI: Miami		Saturday Night Playhouse					
SBN 21								Sony Music Video		Sony Music Video		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Shepherd's Voice		SBN Music Video	
Solar Sports				WTA Dubai Duty Free SF2					GWS 14-2006	NBA Game Pistons @ Magic		Ultimate Fighting Championship		Boxing Superfights		Bell South Classic Highlights		The Honda Classic Highlights	NBA Inside Stuff
Sports Plus								World Poker Tour 2											
Star Movies			Welcome To Mooseport			Brown Sugar (5:15 PM)				Hope Floats (7:05 PM)				Octopussy				On Her Majesty's Secret Service	
Star World		The Collector		Miami Vice		Wild Card		Less Than Perfect	The Drew Carey Show	Race To The Altar		TNA Xplosion		Ghost Hunters/ World's Most Amazing Video's		Enterprise		The Simpsons	Less Than Perfect
Studio 23								Sports TV	Nginiig	TBA		Survivor Panama Exile Island (8:10 PM)		Studio 23 Present					

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Fire volunteers relive experiences in exhibit

THE KAISA-ANGELO King Center, more popularly known as Bahay Chinoy in Intramuros, Manila. RODEL ROTONI

By Margaux C. Ortiz

HIS DEATH AT THE AGE OF 21 was sudden, an unexpected culmination to a short life dedicated to serving others.

But Mark Steven Relucio, a Chinese-Filipino firefighter who was killed in the line of duty, left behind a legacy that provided a voice to thousands of fire volunteers all over the country who risk their lives with every wail of the siren, unmindful of the dangers that come with the job.

Relucio died when a wall fell on him and three other colleagues while they were trying to put out a fire that razed an apartment complex in Grace Park, Caloocan City, in May 1997.

But before his death, he wrote his thoughts on "the world of firefighting" in two notebooks, pages from which are now on display in a special exhibit being held at the Kaisa-Angelo King Heritage Center (popularly known as Bahay Tsinoy) in Intramuros, Manila.

Bahay Tsinoy vice president Meah See explained that the exhibit, aptly titled "Alab ng Puso" (Fire of the Heart), was conceptualized to put a face to the nearly 3,000 Chinese-Filipino volunteer firefighters nationwide.

Celebration of life

"Alab ng Puso was meant to celebrate the lives of these firefighters during the Fire Prevention Month of March—their random acts of heroism and the episodes of humanity that they both witness and exhibit while doing their jobs," See said in an interview with the INQUIRER.

In addition to Relucio's journal and a collage of photos taken of firemen in action, the interactive exhibit also showcases audio discs containing interviews with volunteer firefighters in Binondo, Caloocan, Iloilo, Bacolod and Cebu.

"Apart from usual preconceptions that Chinese-Filipino volunteers, who do not ask for financial compensation for their services, are quick to respond to fire incidents, people could listen to interviews revealing the firefighters' human side," See said.

See explained that the Chinese-Filipino firefighters have come a long way since their brigades were conceived in the late 1960s.

"The concept of community service as embodied by the Chinese-Filipino volunteers actually stemmed from racial conflict between the government and the Chinese communities in Binondo and Divisoria," See said.

See explained that because most of Chinatown's inhabitants were Chinese citizens, government firemen were reluctant to help them.

A big fire in 1966 prompted Chinatown residents to form their own fire brigades as a solution to the pressing problem.

Big honor

"It was a big honor to become a member of the volunteer fire brigade," Aquino Lee, vice president of the Kalookan City Filipino-Chinese Fire Prevention Association (KCFCFPA), said.

Lee was 26 years old when he joined the KCFCFPA as a founding member. His sentiments were not unlike the young Relucio's, when the latter joined the KCFCFPA in May 1993. "Every moment of firefighting (is) remarkable, so to record it down (would be) the most memorable of all," Relucio wrote on the first page of his journal.

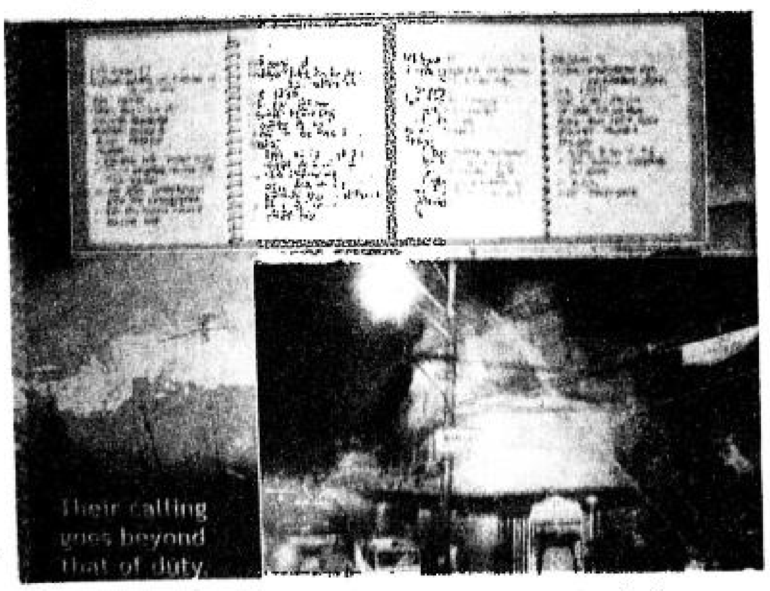
Relucio proceeded to report his observations and experiences, in bullet form, on every fire incident he responded to until he died four years later.

Some were funny ("A pig walked in front of me while a live wire was exploding"), some were touching ("The people from a depressed area gave us one liter of coke and crackers."), while some were merely human ("I lent a *kaldero* to a beautiful woman").

Lee urged young people, aged 18 and above, to join the volunteer brigades, saying that the service would hone their social awareness and develop their physical capabilities as well.

"Anyone can sign up," Lee said, explaining that fire does not choose its victims. "Who knows, maybe another set of young heroes would once again give us something to be proud of."

The exhibit ends on April 16 at the Kaisa-Angelo King Heritage Center, corner Anda and Cabildo Streets, Intramuros, Manila.



EXCERPTS from a firefighter's diary and an interactive display are featured in the exhibit titled "Alab ng Puso." RODEL ROTONI

Graft charges filed...

From page A21

The congresswoman, a member of the ruling Lakas-CMD and who is on her second term as representative of Quezon City's fourth district, refused to comment on whether or not she knew Vineles.

The complainant said he started working for Daza in 2005 as a house caretaker and as a supervisor in her pizza parlor. He also served as an assistant for Castelo, he added.

At the time he worked for the congresswoman, Vineles was allegedly receiving his pay from the MMDA as a traffic aide, according to his lawyer, Vic Rodriguez. Although his client never worked at the MMDA, he still drew his salary because Abrigonda signed and approved his time record, the lawyer added.

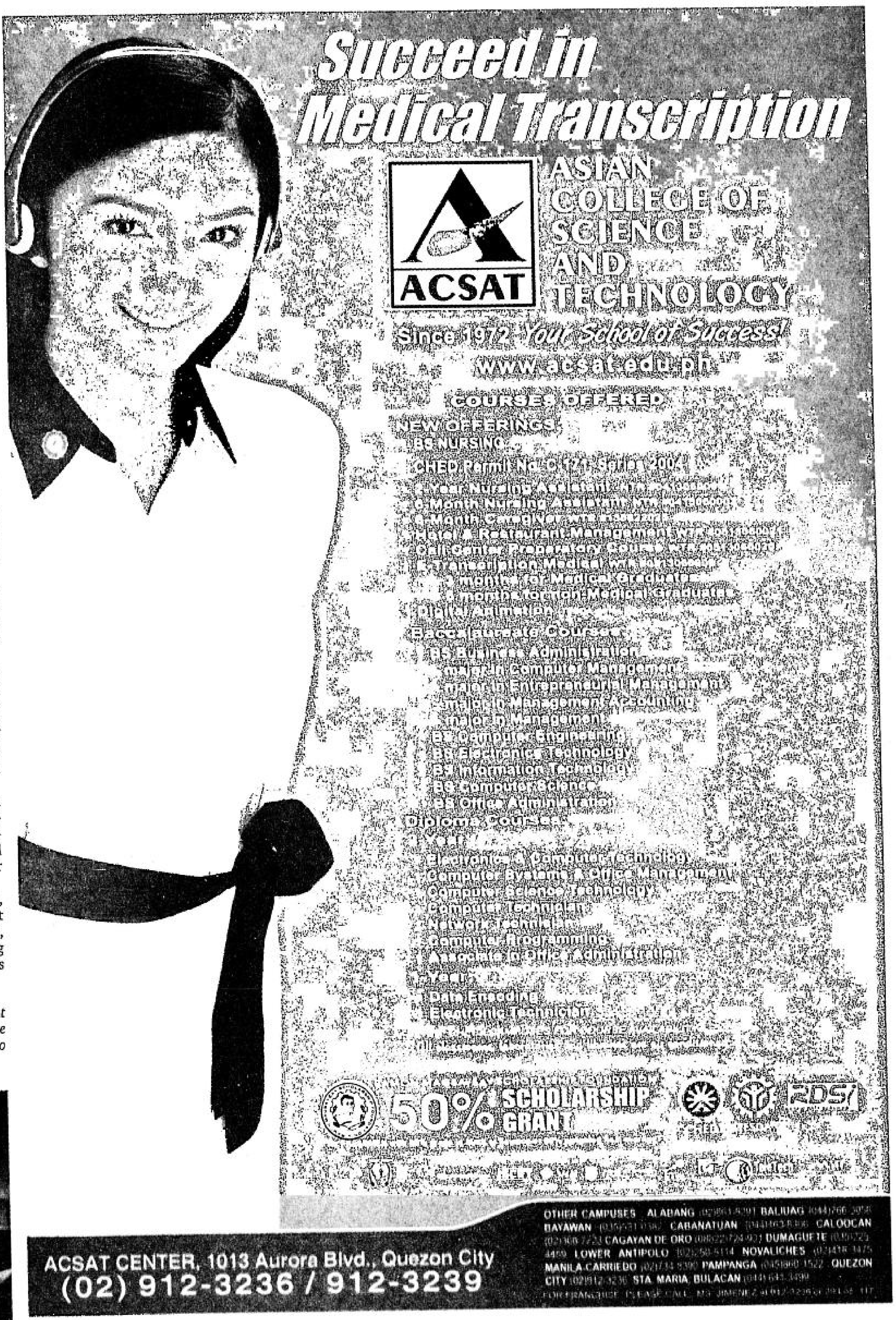
Rodriguez said the 18 other persons Vineles mentioned in his affidavit "were receiving salaries from government agencies like the public works department, the Quezon City government, President Macapagal-Arroyo's Oyster Project and the MMDA."

"Clearly, that is a violation of the provisions of Republic Act 3019 (the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices), Articles 171, and 217 of the Revised Penal Code," Rodriguez added.

He also said that the accused committed "grave misconduct, dishonesty and conduct grossly prejudicial to the government," and asked the court to suspend them for a period of six months pending the investigation of his client's allegations.

Vineles added that he knew of another alleged "ghost employee," a certain Melba Catacutan who continued to draw her salary from Daza's office although she was already in the United States.

Vineles claimed that he deposited Catacutan's monthly salary into Castelo's bank account.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Thailand crisis far from over

BANGKOK—THAI PRIME MINISTER Thaksin Shinawatra's decision to step aside after a snap election left him unable to form a new government has let some steam out of a seven-month political crisis, but the drama is far from over.

The main opposition parties are boycotting by-elections on April 23 meant to complete last weekend's snap poll called by Thaksin to rout critics who accused him of corruption and abuse of power. They want political reforms first.

Most of the 39 seats, all but one in the southern opposition stronghold, could remain unfilled.

Only a full parliament can elect a new prime minister to replace Thaksin, but parliament must convene within 30 days of the April 2 poll.

Meanwhile, Thaksin says he will take "a rest" but retain leadership of his Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party, a move his enemies say will allow him to pull strings from behind the scenes.

Months of hard negotiations lie ahead and the outcome is uncertain.

Following are some possible scenarios:

Rolling by-elections: The Election Commission says reruns in 39 constituencies are open to the three parties that boycotted the April 2 general election. The opposition wants meaningful political reforms first.

If the by-elections are inconclusive, the EC could ask the Constitutional Court to allow parliament to meet while more polls are held, analysts say.

But that could trigger protests against the court which has handed Thaksin two favorable rulings in the past.

"Whether the Constitutional Court, the involuntary power broker in the present political situation, would play along with the TRT remains to be seen," said Kim Eng Securities.

Protests resume: Street protesters outside Government House have packed up. But they left behind yet another ultimatum for Thaksin—leave politics completely, or the protests resume on April 30.

"Thaksin will no longer be the prime minister, but he is still the leader of the party and will bring in his nominee to implement his policies, which we won't accept," media mogul and rally leader Sondhi Limthongkul said.

But April is the hottest month of the year and opinion polls show most Bangkok residents growing weary of the protests and the disruptions they cause.

Constitutional reform: Critics say the 1997 "People's" Constitution needs a rewrite to close loopholes used by Thaksin to undermine checks and balances and subvert the independence of watchdog agencies.

That process will take six months to a year and involve a "neutral" committee of former charter drafters, judges and legal experts, says Bhokin Bhalakula, the former speaker of parliament and lawyer who is likely to oversee the process.

The opposition has not spelled out what reforms it wants, but analysts say it may seek to curb the powers of the prime minister.

A rule requiring election candidates to belong to a party for 90 days—designed to prevent the political bed-hopping that fostered shaky coalitions—may also come under scrutiny by unhappy factions within Thaksin's party.

"There will be a nasty war during the political reform process as a lot of politicians want to change this 90-day rule," the Nation newspaper said.

Royal intervention: June 9 is a date that looms large in Thailand.

Thaksin cited King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 60th anniversary on the throne as the main reason for stepping aside ahead of celebrations to be attended by royalty from around the world.

"I ask every party, whether you love or hate me, to please think of the core of the country. The king," Thaksin said in urging Thais to reunite. *Reuters*

A THAI sells noodles in Chiang Mai province, April 6. While much of urban Thailand celebrated the political demise of Thaksin, voters in his northern home province have voiced regret and hail his achievements. AFP

Two Koreas agree to hold new talks

SEOUL—NORTH AND SOUTH Korea have agreed to resume bilateral talks later this month as diplomatic efforts to revive stalled six-party negotiations on Pyongyang's nuclear program gain momentum.

Almost a month after pulling out of the negotiations over US-South Korean military drills, North Korea proposed resuming inter-Korean high-level talks in Pyongyang on April 21-24, the unification ministry here said Friday.

"We received a message from Pyongyang Thursday, which suggested the high-level talks should be resumed," a ministry spokesperson told AFP. "We replied that we agreed."

Pyongyang on March 11 called off the inter-Korean talks originally set for last week in protest at US-South Korean war games, which it described as "a test nuclear war" against the communist state.

The talks between Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok and his North Korean counterpart Kwon Ho-ung, chief councilor of the North's Cabinet, are among the highest-level meetings held between the neighbors.

The talks are designed to focus on economic cooperation and reconciliation, but Seoul is expected to use the meeting to urge Pyongyang to return to six-nation talks on its nuclear program.

Discussions on the North's nuclear intentions have been in limbo since November and Pyongyang has made it clear that it will not return to the table unless Washington lifts financial sanctions imposed on the Stalinist regime for allegedly counterfeiting US dollars and laundering money. *AFP*

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong-il, center, poses for a photograph with the soldiers of Korean People's Army 821 unit, which is situated on the undisclosed forefront, North Korea, in this early April, 2006 photo. AP

9/11 horror relived at Moussaoui trial

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA—FORMER New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani told jurors in the Sept. 11 Zacarias Moussaoui death penalty trial Thursday he is still haunted by memories of severed body parts and people leaping from the World Trade Center inferno.

Testifying at the trial of convicted al-Qaida plotter Moussaoui, Giuliani painted a harrowing picture of carnage and chaos, as Manhattan streets were swallowed by a "nuclear cloud" of debris.

"It was the worst experience of my life. I hope it was the worst experience I will ever have or the country will ever have," Giuliani said after taking the witness stand for the prosecution.

"Every day I think about it. Every day some part of it comes back to me. I can see a person jumping, see the body parts or see a little boy or girl at a funeral," the former mayor said.

It was a view of Sept. 11, 2001 that many Americans have yet to see, as the graphic pictures of suicide leaps and dismembered bodies were mostly not shown on US television to avoid upsetting viewers.

Prosecutors called Giuliani as a witness after telling jurors that the "voices of the victims" of the attacks on New York and Washington would convince them to sentence Moussaoui to death.

They played video clips of people jumping to their deaths from the World Trade Center and closeup images of the hijacked airliners smashing into the twin towers, drawing gasps from the hushed courtroom.

Jurors also heard the voice of Sept. 11 hijacker Mohammad Atta, who mistakenly keyed the air traffic control microphone instead of the cabin intercom minutes before flying into the World Trade Center.

"We have some planes," the accented voice of Atta could be heard saying, filling the courtroom. "We have some planes. Stay quiet and you will be okay. We are returning to the airport."

Jurors watched Giuliani intently. Moussaoui, 37, who was wearing a green prison jumpsuit and a white knit skullcap, seemed to pray under his breath as footage was shown of the twin towers crashing down.

"You will hear the voices of the victims of Sept. 11," assistant US attorney Robert Spencer told the jury as the second phase of the sentencing trial of the Moroccan-born Frenchman got under way.

"You will hear the voices of the victims' families," he said. "Those voices, that evidence, will be all you need in this case to sentence the defendant."

"Al-Qaida turned those buildings into slaughterhouses." Defense lawyer Gerald Zerkin urged the jury to reject the death penalty, saying the defense would prove Moussaoui had schizophrenia, was the victim of a difficult upbringing and had been indoctrinated by al-Qaida.

He urged jurors "not to be fooled" by Moussaoui's apparent normal behavior in court and said several specialists would testify he is mentally ill. *AFP*

Suicide bombers kill 40 at Baghdad mosque

BAGHDAD—TWO SUICIDE ATtackers wearing women's cloaks detonated explosives Friday in a Shiite mosque in northern, killing at least 40 people and wounding scores of others, police said. It was the second major attack against Shiite targets in as many days.

Police Lt. Col. Falah al-Mohammedawi said the attacks occurred at the Buratha mosque, which is affiliated with the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the main Shiite party.

First reports said the explosions were caused by mortar fire, but al-Mohammedawi said police were now sure that they were caused by suicide attackers.

The attack occurred as worshippers were leaving at the end of Friday prayers, the main weekly religious service. Earlier Friday, the Interior Interior cautioned people in Baghdad to avoid crowds near mosques and markets due to a car bomb threat.

A prominent Shiite politician, Jalal Eddin al-Sagheer, was among the worshippers but police said he was unhurt.

Frantic rescuers carried the bodies from the mosque compound on makeshift wooden wheelbarrows and loaded them on the back of pickup trucks. The Baghdad city council urged Iraqis to donate blood for those wounded.

On Thursday, a car bomb exploded about 300 meters from the Imam Ali mosque in Najaf, the most sacred shrine in Iraq for Shiite Muslims. Ten people were killed, police said. *AP*

Asia medical tourism seen earning billions

SINGAPORE—ASIA'S MEDICAL TOURISM industry is expected to generate over $4.4 billion a year by 2012, with India, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea the top destinations, a leading travel firm said Friday.

Low-cost, high-quality healthcare in Asia is already attracting more than 1.6 million tourists each year, mostly from within the region, according to a report issued by Singapore-based air ticketing firm Abacus International.

"Asia is a preferred healthcare destination and is set to grow further, fueled by the relatively low-priced healthcare services available," Abacus president Don Birch said.

According to the report, medical tourism—which refers to trips combining treatment and checkups with leisure—is growing by 20 to 30 percent each year with the industry now worth around half a billion dollars a year in Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and India.

"Asia is an ideal growth environment ... with competitively-priced quality healthcare service in major tourist cities," Birch said.

Thailand welcomes more than one million medical tourists each year because of the variety of procedures available, Abacus said.

Bumrungrad International Hospital for example offers a full spectrum of surgical services performed by certified doctors all under one roof.

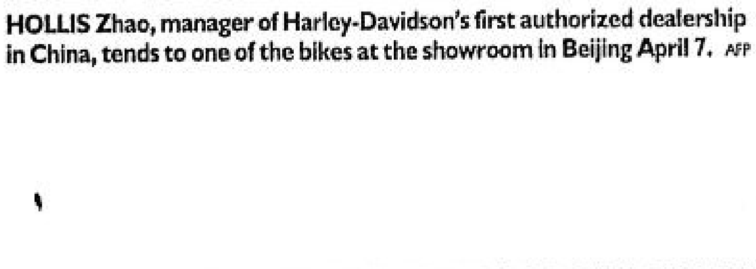
Singapore, on the other hand, is known for delivering cutting-edge medical treatment and attracts medical tourists with its competitively priced services.

For example, hip-replacement surgery costs two-thirds less in Singapore than in the United States, the report said.

The city-state attracts 370,000 medical tourists each year and is targeting one million medical visitors and $1.6 billion in revenue by 2012.

India, whose medical tourism business is growing at 30 percent per year, currently draws about 150,000 visitors each year. It is forecast to generate at least $2.2 billion by 2012. *AFP*

After 50 years' trying, Harley-Davidson roars into China



HOLLIS Zhao, manager of Harley-Davidson's first authorized dealership in China, tends to one of the bikes at the showroom in Beijing April 7. AFP

By Cindy Sui

BEIJING—SHINY, SLEEK MACHINES line the showroom of Harley-Davidson's first authorized dealership in China, silently beckoning freedom-loving, individualistic Chinese with the slogan: "Let's Ride!"

The official launch of the dealership, the first the US manufacturer has appointed in China, on Saturday marks the end as well as the beginning of a long journey for the Milwaukee-based company and Chinese Harley fans.

The new store, called "Beijing Harley-Davidson," began doing business in the Chinese capital this week and will sell and service the low-riding bikes as well as parts, accessories, clothing and collectibles.

It has taken Harley more than 50 years to enter communist-ruled China, due to barriers including government restrictions on powerful bikes and simply the lack of demand for one of the United States' most iconic symbols.

But with a fast-expanding wealthy class and cravings for luxury goods growing, Harleys would undoubtedly appeal to Chinese people, said Hollis Zhao, general manager of the shop owned by Beijing businessman Wan Jidong.

"People equate Harleys with freedom. That's why Chinese people like them," Zhao told AFP from the store that is located next to an upscale housing estate along Beijing's Fourth Ring Road.

For the same reason some lawyers and doctors in the US shed their suits and ties on weekends and mount their Harleys, an increasing number of Chinese people want to express their alter ego through Harleys, Zhao said.

"They might look urbane, but Chinese people also have a wild side," said Zhao, a longtime motorcycle rider, who has journeyed from Beijing to Tibet on a two-wheeler.

"Those who own Harleys in China use it to show their personality. Others treat it as a symbol of success."

While a vast majority of the 80 million motorcycles owned in China are domestic brands—and most are used in the countryside by farmers—a growing number of people want to ride imported heavyweight bikes for fun.

Many major cities in China have riders' clubs that organizes tours.

About 1,000 Harleys are already in China, but they were smuggled in because of the lack of a dealership until this month.

Their owners and others who want to buy the bikes are in the upper class, including those who made a fortune from real estate or IT sectors, people who have lived abroad and "princelings"—sons of high ranking officials. *AFP*

US Senate immigration overhaul in doubt

Republicans object, say measure will give amnesty to law-breakers

WASHINGTON—A US SENATE compromise on an overhaul of immigration law appeared to get bogged down late on Thursday in the face of opposition by some Republicans who say it would give amnesty to lawbreakers.

It appeared unlikely the Senate would approve before a two-week congressional break on Friday the radical immigration reform that would give millions of illegal immigrants a chance to earn US citizenship.

The bill's backers expressed fear that failure to enact the legislation before lawmakers leave for their spring break could hurt its chances in a congressional election year.

Senate Republican Leader Bill Frist of Tennessee and Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid of Nevada earlier hailed a "breakthrough" on the compromise bill that would include a guest worker program sought by President George W. Bush.

But the two leaders were unable to agree on how many amendments to the bill would be allowed.

Frist later accused Democrats of trying to block the bill by refusing to allow amendments. Democrats said they wanted to protect the bill from being "gutted" by Republicans opposed the bill.

"Republicans are still deeply divided on this issue, and we must protect this from those senators bent on gutting the bill with hostile amendments," said Reid.

The congressional debate over how to deal with an estimated 11 million illegal immigrants has sparked large protests in many US cities against a crackdown and more demonstrations are planned in 10 cities on Monday.

The Senate is considering a compromise that would allow illegal immigrants who have been in the United States more than five years, about seven to eight million people, a chance to become citizens if they pay a fine, pay their taxes, and meet other requirements such as learning English.

Bush said earlier he was encouraged by the compromise and urged quick passage of the legislation.

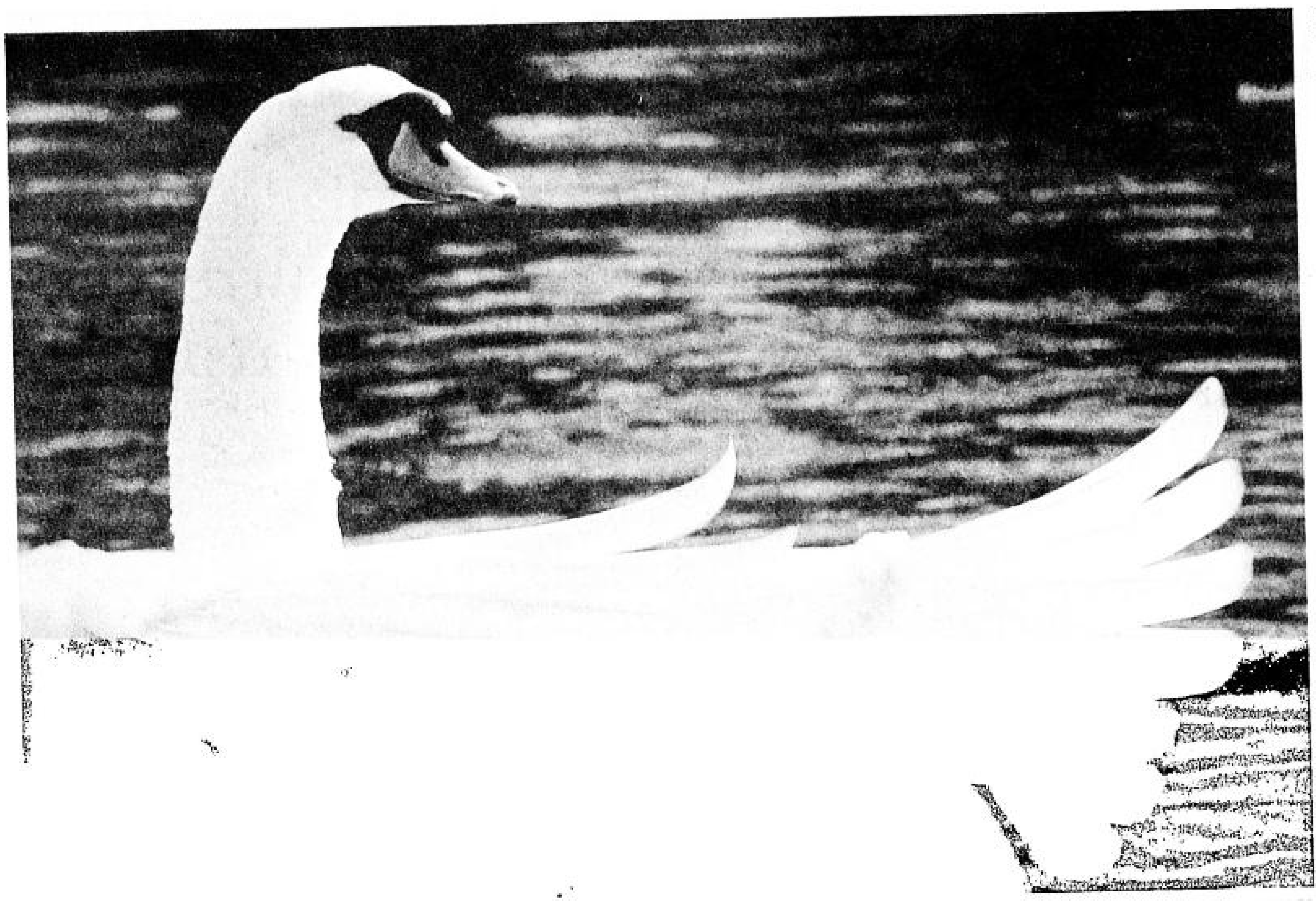
The Mexican government in a statement called the agreement "an important step toward to establishing new mechanisms that permit legal, safe and ordered migration which respects human rights."

Any Senate bill still has to be merged with a House of Representatives version that focuses on border security and enforcement and makes it a felony, instead of a civil offense, to be in the country illegally. It also calls for constructing a fence along parts of the US border with Mexico.

A number of conservative House Republicans also oppose Senate provisions that would give illegal immigrants a chance at legal status and citizenship.

"I do not believe a plan of this nature can pass the House," said Rep. Thomas Tancredo, a Colorado Republican. *Reuters*

Scottish swan has deadly bird flu virus; 3rd infected Egyptian dies



A SWAN flaps its wings in St. James Park in London, April 6. Tests have confirmed that a wild swan found dead in Scotland had the lethal H5N1 strain of bird flu—Britain's first case of the disease. REUTERS

LONDON—BRITAIN CONFIRMED Thursday its first case of H5N1 bird flu, while Egypt recorded its third human fatality as the country struggled to enforce preventive measures to contain the disease.

In Berlin, the German government said some 14,000 more fowl will be slaughtered in a small town near Leipzig where H5N1 bird flu has killed turkeys in the first outbreak on a farm in Germany.

More than 16,400 turkeys, chicken and geese have already been slaughtered since the virus was confirmed Wednesday in the farm in Wermsdorf.

In Britain, the Scottish Executive in Edinburgh said the mute swan—found last week on a harbor slipway in Cellardyke, Fife—perished from the same H5N1 strain that has killed more than 100 people, mainly in Asia.

The confirmation brought to 13 the number of countries in the European Union reporting cases of the feared disease.

Egypt reported its third human death on Thursday—one of two new cases reported, bringing to 11 the total number of confirmed transmissions to humans in the country.

Iman Mohammed Abdel Gawad, a 16-year-old girl from the northern governorate of Menufiya, died after being rushed to hospital Wednesday suffering from high fever and shortness of breath, the official MENA news agency reported.

According to the latest figures released by the World Health Organization, the H5N1 strain has killed at least 108 people worldwide but experts say many cases go unreported.

The bulk of human cases have been reported in Southeast Asia and China, where the epidemic broke out in 2003, but Egypt, Turkey and Azerbaijan have been the most affected countries in the new wave of infections that spread westward this year.

A deadly strain of bird flu has been detected in Africa's most populous city, the Nigerian commercial capital Lagos, Information Minister Frank Nweke said.

"The virus has so far been identified in 12 states, including Lagos, as well as around the federal capital Abuja," Nweke told AFP.

In the three months since the west African country has begun battling avian influenza, more than 450,000 birds have either died or have been killed as part of preventive measures.

Chicken sales have fallen, and many countries have banned Nigerian poultry imports.

In Scotland, local officials, reacting to confirmation that a dead mute swan had the disease, ordered all free-range poultry within a 2,500-sq.m. "wild bird risk area" to be brought inside. *AFP*

Weakened French PM rules out quitting over job reform

PARIS—FRENCH PRIME MINISTER Dominique de Villepin, fighting for his political life over an aborted youth jobs reform that has brought millions onto the streets, appeared Thursday to rule out resigning over the crisis.

Unions have threatened more mass protests unless the reform is dropped by the end of next week, while wildcat student protests continued to block road and rail traffic, as well as access to factories, a port and an airport.

Asked at a press conference if he intended to stand down, Villepin replied: "The president of the republic has entrusted me with a mission and I shall conduct this mission to its conclusion."

"It is time to put this crisis behind us, to restore calm and unity to the country," he added.

"The immediate priority ... is naturally appeasement."

Villepin's authority has been badly undermined in the battle over the First Employment Contract (CPE), which President Jacques Chirac effectively suspended at the weekend, asking for a new law to be drawn up after talks with unions.

Responsibility for the negotiations has been handed to Villepin's powerful rival, ruling UMP party chief and Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, and a recent poll showed 45 percent of the public think the prime minister should step down.

Villepin urged conciliation to end the two-month crisis after protests drew more than a million people—three million, unions said—into the streets for the second time in eight days on Tuesday.

He called on unions—holding a second day of talks with the ruling Union for a Popular Movement (UMP)—to "recognize that flexibility is necessary in order to provide employment for all." *AFP*

Apple software to help owners load Windows XP on Macs

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA—TO broaden its appeal in a Windows-dominated world, Apple Computer Inc. unveiled software to help owners of its new Intel-based Macs run not only its own operating system but also Microsoft Corp.'s rival software.

Apple's shares surged Wednesday as Wall Street bet the move would help Apple grow its current worldwide personal computer market share beyond the current range of 3 percent to 4 percent by attracting more business and home users.

"It makes the Mac the most versatile computer on the market," said Tim Bajarin, a tech industry consultant at Creative Strategies.

Apple's new "Boot Camp" software, a "beta" test version available as a free download, lets computer users with a Windows XP installation disk load it on the Mac. Users could then switch between the two operating systems—using only one at a time—by rebooting, a process that could take a few minutes.

Users would have to get their own copy of Windows XP—the home edition retails for $199 (euro162).

Apple shares rose nearly 10 percent on the news, raising its market capitalization to $57.04 billion (euro46.52 billion)—an increase of more than $5.1 billion (euro4.16 billion).

Van Baker, analyst at research firm Gartner Inc., said Apple is removing one of the hurdles it faced in its long-standing battle to win over Windows-based converts.

"Consumers who were thinking about Macs but hesitated don't have to worry anymore about not being able to run PC software that didn't run on a Mac," Baker said. *AP*

No nudes, but Playboy mag still angers Indons

JAKARTA—THERE ARE NO nudes and the cover is anything but X-rated, but Playboy magazine still sparked a furor Friday when it hit newsstands in the world's most populous Muslim nation.

Indonesia's first edition of the monthly features pictures of underwear-clad women baring at most midriffs, thighs and cleavage, making it no more risque than local editions of British men's magazines FHM and Maxim already on sale here.

And for some that was the problem.

While Muslim hardliners prepared to protest the launch of the magazine, some readers who paid 39,000 rupiah (about $4) were disappointed by the lack of saucy pictures.

"It's sinful to read Playboy if there's no nudity!" a caller to Jakarta's 68H radio said.

"It's a scandal! There's no nude women in the magazine. I think we have been deceived," another caller complained.

Playboy carried an interview with Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Indonesia's most prominent intellectual and author, as well as a lengthy article on reconciliation between Indonesia and East Timor, which broke away from Jakarta in 1999.

But its toned-down look did not assuage the anger of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), a group notorious for carrying out violent anti-vice raids on nightspots in the past and which has vowed to hold protests.

"Our men will come to the magazine's office after Friday prayers. Let's see what's going to happen," FPI leader Muhammad Rizieq Shihab told AFP.

"Playboy is synonymous with pornography. The name itself means a man who likes to play around with women. Who can guarantee that they won't publish nudity in the future?" he asked.

Some newspaper vendors were too afraid to sell the magazine following a recent move by police to seize publications featuring scantily dressed women.

"I want to be on the safe side first, so at the moment I won't be selling Playboy," a vendor, Purba, told Elshinta radio. *AFP*

PLAYBOY
BELOVED JAMIE ADITYA
CAR WARS
MELUPAKAN INDONESIA TIMOR LESTE MERDEKA TANPA LUKA
ALWAYS HAPPY EARLY
THE PLAYBOY INTERVIEW
PRAMOEDYA ANANTA TOER
SEKITAR AGAMA-AGAMA LOKAL

A VENDOR shows an Indonesian version of the Playboy magazine at a newsstand in Jakarta, April 7. The toned-down edition of Playboy went on sale in the world's most populous Muslim nation. AP

Woman jailed for poisoning neighbor's cats

TACOMA, WASHINGTON—A woman was sentenced to 30 days in jail and 30 days of community service for killing her neighbor's three cats with a meal of antifreeze-soaked chicken.

Pierce County prosecutors said Donna Clark, 42, placed the deadly mix in her back yard last May.

Joe Ashbaugh's cats Billy, Topper and Kiki ate the poisonous meal and died.

Prosecutors originally charged Clark with felony first-degree animal cruelty. That charge was eventually reduced to a misdemeanor—poisoning animals—and Clark pleaded guilty to that.

Prosecutors said they couldn't prove Clark intended to cause suffering or knew the cats would be fatally poisoned.

Superior Court Judge Kathryn Nelson ordered Clark taken directly to jail after sentencing Thursday.

"Even though this is a misdemeanor, this is serious and you need to be held accountable for this grievous act," the judge said. *AP*

Trial resumes without Saddam

BAGHDAD—THE TRIAL OF SADdam Hussein on charges of crimes against humanity resumed on Thursday without the deposed Iraqi leader, but the exhead of his revolutionary court took the stand to defend the execution of Shiite villagers in the 1980s.

Awad Ahmad al-Bander, the former chief judge of the revolutionary court and deputy head of Saddam's office, was the only defendant in court for the latest hearing in the trial over the massacre of 148 Shiites.

It was not known why Saddam, who was cross-examined for the first time Wednesday since the trial began in October, was not in court.

Chief judge Rauf Abdel Rahman later adjourned the trial after two hours for a one-day hearing on April 12.

Bander is one of Saddam's seven co-defendants accused over the massacre of villagers from Dujail after an attempt on the Iraqi leader's life in 1982.

He was being cross-examined over testimony given in previous hearings indicated that 35 minors were among those executed over the Dujail assassination bid.

But Bandar said the suspects were fairly tried, adding: "Even if their trial took place against the backdrop of the Iran war it was respectfully conducted and I do not think we violated any legal rules."

"The accused had all the rights and were defended by their lawyers," he said. "I am a judge and my deep conscience does not allow to sentence someone under 20 to death."

Bander's lawyers presented documents saying that some of the Dujail suspects had even plotted to overthrow Saddam's regime and stressed they all were adults.

"All the 148 accused were present when the judgment was delivered against them," Bander said, amid accusations that 46 had died in jails and were not executed. *AFP*

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

The WORLD

Bush cleared leaks on Iraq

Ex-White House aide Libby tags US president in court

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH AUTHOrized Iraq intelligence leaks ahead of the war, indicted former top White House aide I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby said in court papers obtained Thursday.

Libby is suspected of having leaked to the press the identity of CIA agent Valerie Plame—a federal crime in the United States.

According to a document filed Wednesday by federal prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, Libby said he spoke to a reporter in July 2003 after learning from Vice President Dick Cheney that Bush had authorized intelligence leaks.

"Defendant's participation in a critical conversation with Judith Miller ... occurred only after the vice president advised defendant that the president specifically had authorized defendant to disclose certain information in the NIE" (National Intelligence Estimate), the document said.

Libby denies charges of obstruction of justice, perjury and making false statements in an intrigue bound up in the US drive to war with Iraq in 2003.

His trial has been set for January 2007.

The case arose from a probe into the outing of Central Intelligence Agency spy Plame, exposed, Bush critics allege, by senior officials angry that her husband ambassador Joseph Wilson criticized the drive to war with Iraq.

The court document filed this week does not indicate, however, that Bush or Cheney told Libby to unveil Plame.

But an opposition senator pounced on the revelation.

"The more we hear, the more it is clear this goes way beyond Scooter Libby. At the very least, President Bush and Vice President Cheney should fully inform the American people of any role in allowing classified information to be leaked," said Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer. *AFP*

BUSH REUTERS

Bush, Republican Party hit new lows in survey

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush's approval ratings hit a series of new lows in an AP-Ipsos poll that also shows Republicans surrendering their advantage on national security—grim election-year news for a party struggling to stay in power.

Democratic leaders predicted they will seize control of one or both chambers of Congress in November. Republicans said they feared the worst unless the political landscape quickly changes.

"These numbers are scary. We've lost every advantage we've ever had," Republican pollster Tony Fabrizio said. "The good news is Democrats don't have much of a plan. The bad news is they may not need one."

There is more at stake than the careers of Republican lawmakers. A Democratic-led Congress could bury the last vestiges of Bush's legislative agenda and subject the administration to high-profile investigations of the Iraq war, the CIA leak case, warrantless eavesdropping and other matters.

In the past two congressional elections, Republicans gained seats on the strength of Bush's popularity and a perception among voters that the Republican Party was stronger on national security than Democrats.

Those advantages are gone, according to a survey of 1,003 adults conducted this week for The Associated Press by Ipsos, an international polling firm.

Just 36 percent of the public approves of Bush's job performance, his lowest-ever rating in AP-Ipsos polling. By contrast, the president's job approval rating was 47 percent among likely voters just before Election Day 2004 and a whopping 64 percent among registered voters in October 2002. *AP*

Mladic ready to surrender, says report

SARAJEVO—A BOSNIAN WEEKLY SAID ON Thursday top Bosnian Serb war crimes fugitive Ratko Mladic told UN chief prosecutor Carla del Ponte he would surrender soon, in a phone call placed by the Serbian prime minister from his office.

Slobodna Bosna quoted an unnamed source close to Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica as saying the premier called Mladic on March 29 when his guest Del Ponte asked him how he could be so sure of his promise to deliver him to The Hague tribunal within weeks.

The magazine said Kostunica put Mladic on speakerphone so Del Ponte could hear the fugitive in person, promising to surrender and asking for medical treatment. There was no immediate comment on the report from Kostunica's office.

The handover of Mladic is key to Serbia's bid to join the European Union in the coming years.

Belgrade has repeatedly denied knowing where he is hiding or having contact with him, but Kostunica has pledged several times in recent weeks that the EU's conditions will be met soon.

The EU decided last week to carry on with a second round of so-called association talks with Serbia and Montenegro despite the fact that Mladic was still at large.

It did so after Del Ponte reported unspecified progress in Belgrade's cooperation with the tribunal, averting a suspension of the talks.

A Del Ponte spokesperson said on Thursday that Kostunica had persuaded Del Ponte during her visit that the former Bosnian Serb Army commander, who is indicted for genocide, would be handed over to The Hague this month.

He declined to say exactly how she was persuaded.

Slobodna Bosna said Kostunica had simply picked up the phone and called Mladic, who told the prosecutor he was ready to surrender but was seriously ill. *Reuters*

69 killed in Red Sea accident

DJIBOUTI—AT LEAST 69 PEOPLE drowned, 20 were missing and 36 injured after a boat carrying more than 200 capsized as it left the main harbor of the Red Sea state of Djibouti on Thursday, hospital sources said.

Mohammed Said Median, director of emergency services at the Tapelletier Hospital where most of the victims were brought, told AFP that 69 people had lost their lives and that seven of the 36 injured were suffering from serious wounds.

At least 77 people escaped without injury, he said.

There were conflicting accounts of the death toll from official Djibouti sources.

A spokesperson for the foreign ministry said at least 66 people had died while state television quoted the interior ministry as saying that at least 62 people had died.

Television reports said the boat, a traditional wooden vessel, was carrying between 250 and 300 people when the accident occurred around midday as it left the Port of Djibouti.

Officials at a French military base here said they believed the death toll could rise.

"We may find more bodies in the hull of the boat or in the sea," one told AFP.

The French ambassador to Djibouti, Jean-Paul Angelier, said the death toll remained unclear. *AFP*

AFP

FINE TIME IN A BEER SPA
Two unidentified girls relax, one taking a beer bath, both drinking a pint of Czech beer, March 17 in Chodova Plana near Marianske Lazne (Mariendbad) in a herbal beer spa, the latest Czech "therapeutic" offering the country's first "beer spa."

Olmert tasked with forming Israeli government

JERUSALEM—ACTING PREMIER Ehud Olmert was on Thursday tasked by President Moshe Katsav with forming Israel's next government, paving the way for a broad coalition set to redraw the borders of the Jewish state.

Olmert, who was made acting leader three months ago when his mentor and predecessor Ariel Sharon suffered a massive stroke, led Kadima to a narrow win in last week's election but has won the endorsement of enough rival parties to establish a new coalition.

"I am honored to announce that I have decided to entrust Ehud Olmert with the task of forming the next government," Katsav told a news conference after talks with the Kadima party leader at his official residence in Jerusalem.

"I praise Olmert's announcement that he seeks to form a stable and broad government and that he has not rejected any party from joining it."

Katsav said a clear majority of newly elected MPs had recommended Olmert be given the job following talks with representatives of the 12 political parties who won seats in the 120-member parliament.

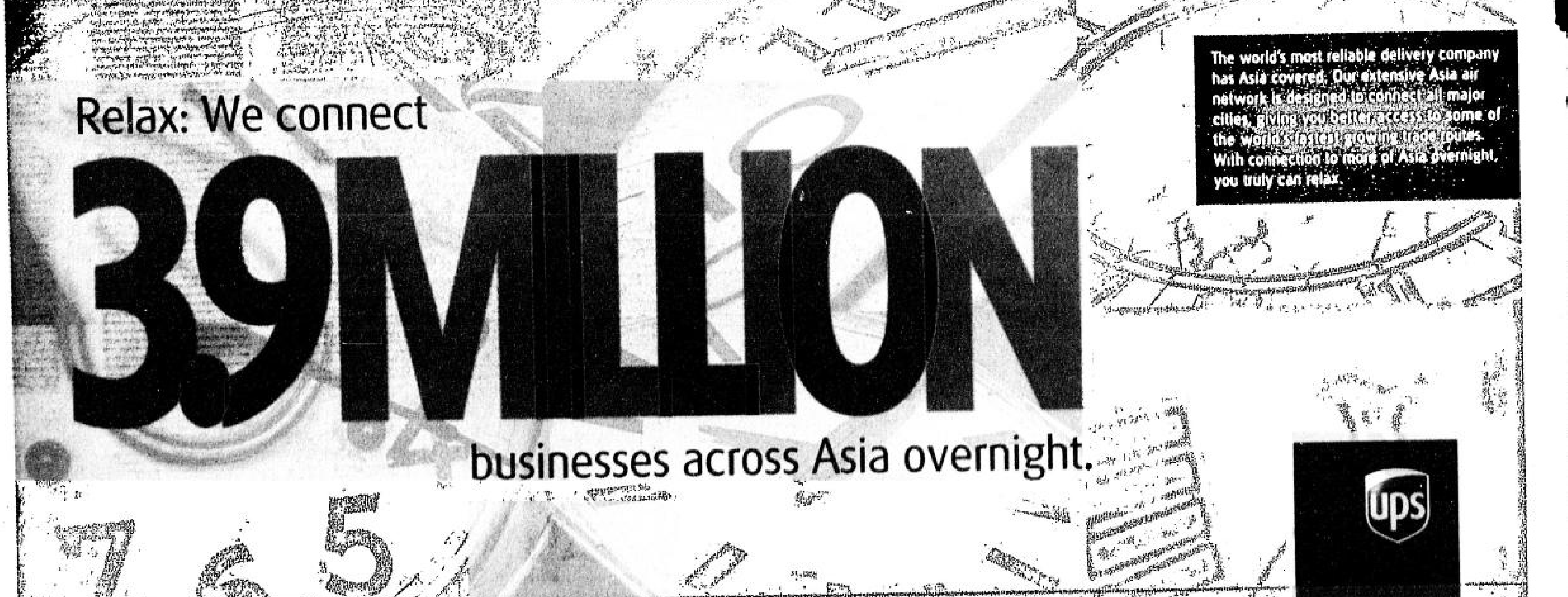
"During my meetings with the different factions, 78 MPs recommended that I appoint Mr Olmert. No other name was put forward."

Olmert pledged to complete the coalition talks as quickly as possible but said it would take time to ensure a lineup that could last until the scheduled end of his term of office in 2010.

"I will do my utmost to complete this task as quickly as possible," said Olmert as he sat alongside Katsav.

"But forming a stable coalition which can remain place throughout the next four years will not be easy."

Kadima won 29 seats in the March 28 election, less than the number predicted in opinion polls, but 10 more than nearest rivals and main coalition partners the center-left Labour party. *AFP*



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Beermen whip Giants, wrest lead

By June Navarro

ANTIPOLO CITY—SAN MIGUEL Beer's high-octane offense proved too much for the league's best defensive team as the Beermen walloped the Purefoods Giants, 93-77, last night in the Gran Matador-PBA Philippine Cup at the Ynares Center.

Danny Seigle registered his fourth double-double of the conference with 30 points on 9-of-18 field-goal shooting and 12 rebounds to help the Beermen nail a fourth straight victory.

However, it was the heroics of Dondon Hontiveros in the third period that propelled the Beermen to the solo leadership with a 6-2 win-loss card.

Hontiveros was a perfect 5-of-5 from the three-point region, finishing with 17 of his 19 points to give the Beermen a 76-59 spread entering the fourth.

With the victory, San Miguel Beer mentor Jong Uichico clinched his second coaching stint in the All-Star games to be held in Cagayan de Oro City on April 27-29.

The other coaching slot is a toss-up between Coca-Cola's Binky Favis and Ryan Gregorio of Purefoods.

Should the Tigers beat Sta. Lucia Realty tomorrow, Favis will be the next rookie coach to call the shots in the All-Star after Alfrancis Chua of Tanduay in 1999.

Barangay Ginebra coach Siot Tanquingcen could still throw a wrench on the All-Star aspirations of Gregorio and Favis, depending on the outcome of the Kings' meeting with the Beermen on Sunday.

"I wasn't really thinking about it (All-Star)," said Uichico, who steered the veterans' squad to a 112-105 victory during the 2001 All-Star game. "It was just a bonus for all the hard work."

After posting the tournament's longest win streak at four games, the law of averages finally caught up with the Giants, who fell to 5-3 on the day Gregorio celebrated his 34th birthday.

The other half of San Miguel's revered 4Ds also delivered with Danny Ildefonso and Dorian Peña chipping in 14 and 11 points each.

Norman Gonzales delivered the goods as Sta. Lucia Realty snapped a three-game skid with an 89-82 conquest of Alaska in the second game.

Gonzales tallied career-highs 20 points, including five of five triple attempts, and 13 rebounds as the Realtors improved to 2-5. Alaska fell to 3-5.

DANNY Seigle of San Miguel dominates as the Beermen whipped the Purefoods Giants last night, 93-77. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

The scores:

First Game

SAN MIGUEL 93—Seigle 30, Hontiveros 19, Ildefonso 14, Peña 11, Cablay 6, Calaguio 5, Racela 4, Noble 4, Kong 0, Lopez 0, Gonzales 0, Adriano 0.

PUREFOODS 77—Tejada 17, Yap J 12, Limpot 10, Raymundo 10, Pingris 7, Yap R 7, Artadi 6, Castillo 4, Evangelista 2, Yee 2, Billones 0.

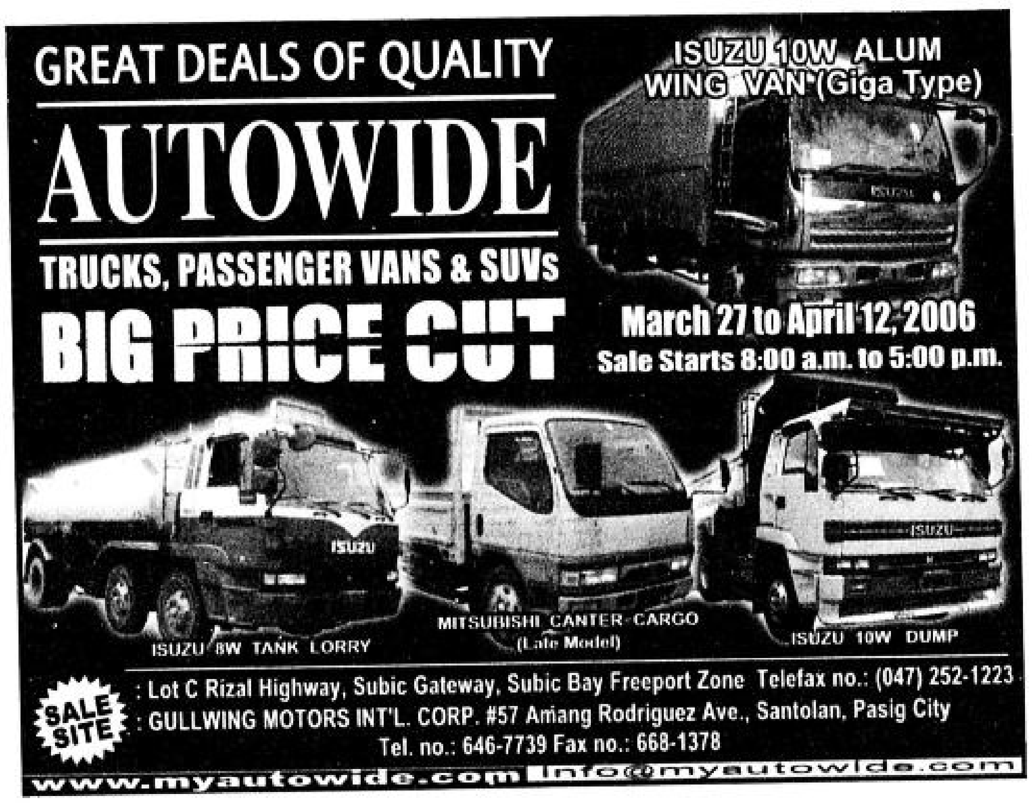
Quarters: 21-14, 40-31, 76-59, 93-77.

Second Game

STA. LUCIA 89—Gonzales 20, Mendoza 17, Omolon 13, Cabagnot 12, Torion 9, Tolomia 8, Calimag 6, Agapito 4, Catli 0, Aquino 0.

ALASKA 82—Cortez 25, Belasco 23, Dela Cruz 13, Allado 9, Thoss 4, Hugnatan 4, Hawkins 2, Cariaso 2, Wilson 0, Bajar 0.

Quarters: 26-18, 43-47, 72-61, 89-82.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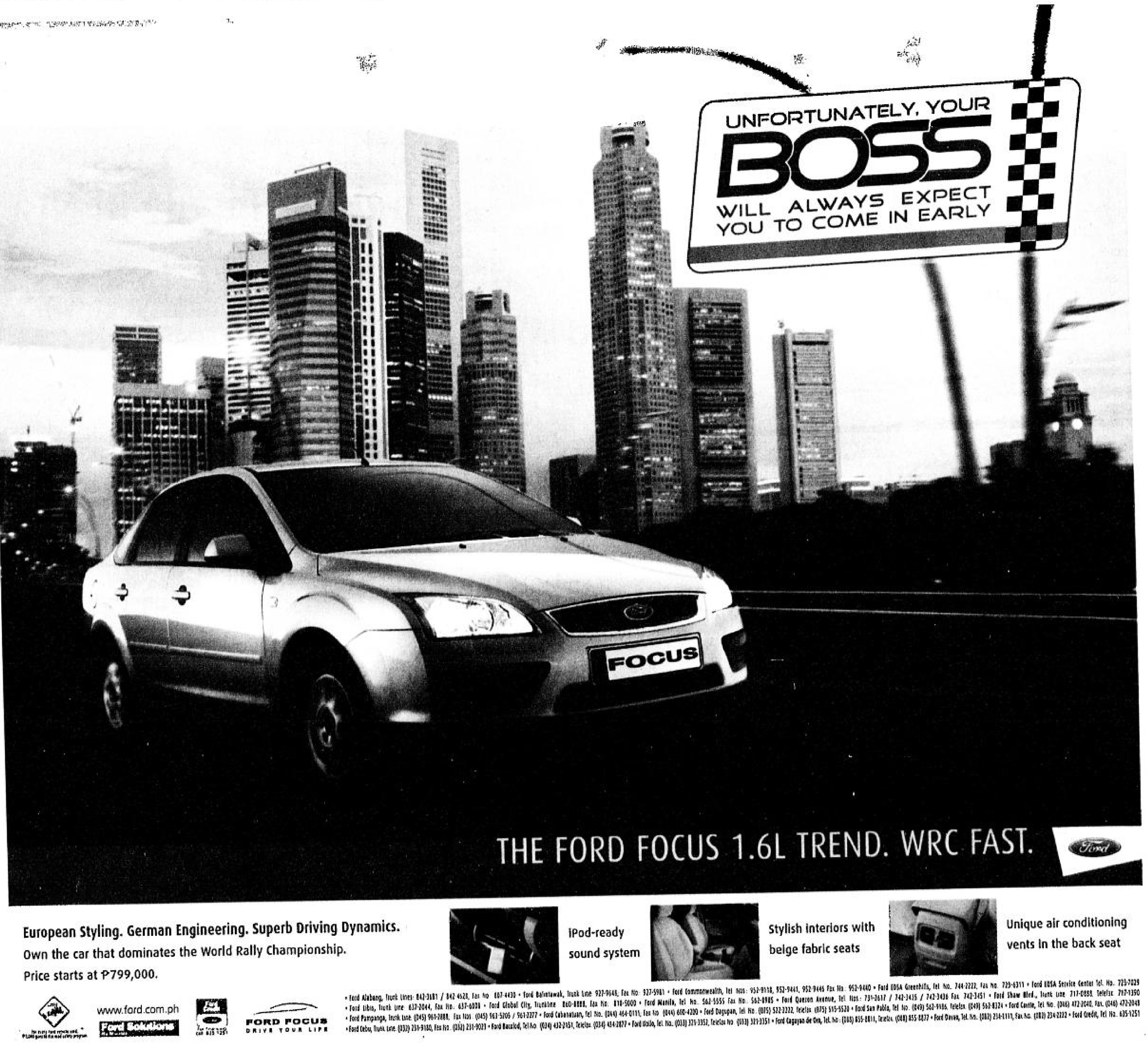
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ASIAN AQUATHLON

SEA Games bets open campaign today

By Jasmine W. Payo

SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES VETERANS ARLAND Macasieb and Noel Salvador will carry the country's colors in the Asian Aquathlon Championship today at The Lakeshore in Mexico, Pampanga.

The two Filipinos will be vying for the title in the 2.5 kilometer run-1K swim-2.5K run event against more than 100 participants from Japan, Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, South Korea and Australia.

Tomorrow, it will be national champion Ryan Mendoza's turn to spearhead the Philippine campaign in the Asian Duathlon Championship at the Clark Expo grounds in Clark Field, Pampanga.

Triathlon Association of the Philippines president Tom Carrasco predicted a close fight in aquathlon between host Philippines and Hong Kong, which is fielding a formidable under-23 contingent.

South Korea, which will be fielding its tough national squad, is the team to beat in the duathlon competition.

But Carrasco said the Philippines will field an impressive aquathlon roster, which includes 2006 national age-group triathlon champion Kim Mangrobang of the Dominican College in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, last year's age group winner Gerrie Calinawan, under-23 female champion Lea Coline Langit, Mimi Lucas and junior triathletes Mikki Quilala and Joash Serrano.

Mendoza is fresh off his victory in the Asian Duathlon Cup in Thailand. Joining him in the 10K run-40K bike-5K run event are Jeffrey Valdes, Augusto Benedicto and Joseph Millanes.

"We are confident that our local athletes will deliver in both the aquathlon and the duathlon events," said Carrasco.

Other favorites in the duathlon race are Takashi Nakata and Kodo Hiramustu of Japan, Australian duathlon champion Rafael Bugh, Sharon Abdullah of Malaysia and Kenta Ando of Malaysia.

Over 50 youngsters aged 15 years and below will also be competing in the kiddie triathlon today.

"This is our youth triathlon development program that in the past has helped us expand our base of triathletes," said Carrasco.

Jewels seek 5th straight vs Sparks

SO WHAT KEEPS THE MONTAÑA JEWELS GOING?

Just plain hard work, according to coach Nel Parado, who will seek a fifth straight win when the Jewels tackle the Toyota Otis Sparks in the PBL Unity Cup at 4 p.m. today at the San Andres Gym.

"We just prepare well for every game," said Parado. "Right from the start, we've always said we're here to win."

Meanwhile, the Rain or Shine Elasto Painters will try to recover from their first loss when they oppose the rookie TeleTech Titans at 2 p.m.

After posting only three wins in the recent Heroes' Cup, Toyota Otis has already matched that record in four games to join title favorite Rain or Shine in second place.

And coach Louie Alas believes that his Sparks, the cellar dwellers in the last two conferences, can keep up with the seasoned Jewels.

"We can match up with their backcourt, but their advantage is their experience," said Alas. "Most of their starters are PBA draftees, plus there's Alex Compton."

Parado, too, had singled out Compton's performance as one of the key factors in the Jewels' strong start.

"Even if he doesn't score, there's his leadership inside the court," said Parado. "He does many things for us, especially in assists."

The Jewels proved to be the superior team when they battled the Elasto Painters for the solo lead last Tuesday.

Even with a sprained ankle, the 5-foot-8 Froilan Baguion took charge in the closing minutes to lead the Jewels past the towering Painters, 60-58.

Baguion, named Player of the Week by the PBL Press Corps, shot 10 straight points in the last three minutes.

The heavily favored Painters are expected again to turn to Jojo Tangkay, Marvin Ortiguerra, Jay-R Reyes and new 6-foot-10 recruit Samigue Eman.

Tangkay, last conference's MVP, scored 23 points in his last outing. Jasmine W. Payo

STANDINGS	W	L
Montaña	4	0
R. or Shine	3	1
Toyota Otis	3	1
G. Goose	2	2
Magnolia	2	2
Hapee-PCU	1	3
TeleTech	1	3
Harbour Centre	0	4

GAMES TODAY
(*Olivarez College Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs TeleTech
4 p.m.—Montaña vs Toyota Otis

GRANNY Goose's Dennis Concha fakes Hapee's Gabby Espinas out of position in their PBL game recently. ERIK ARAZAS

Misamis Oriental cagers pull rug from under Iligan

CAGAYAN DE ORO—PRYCE PHARma-MisOr stunned erstwhile unbeaten Iligan City, 94-80, Wednesday in the ML Kwarta Padala Mindanao Visayas Basketball Association (MVBA) First Conference at the Xavier University Gym.

Pryce Pharma caught Iligan napping in the second period with a balanced attack to seize control for good. The team of MVBA chair Gov. Oscar Moreno and coach Rex Salvana then went to Dondon Mendoza and Jesson Alfeche in the third period to erect its biggest lead, 68-54.

Iligan tried to close the gap but three straight baskets by center Marvin Mercado and five free throws down the stretch by guard Ramil Tagupa ensured Pryce Pharma's third win in seven games in the tournament backed by ML Kwarta Padala, Nature's Spring Drinking Water, Cokaliong Shipping Lines, Panasonic, Molten and Sulpicio Lines.

Iligan saw its winning run end at four games but still remained on top of the Mindanao Division.

Alfeche led Pryce Pharma with 18 points followed by Mercado with 16. Three other players scored in twin digits as Mendoza chipped in 13, Jessie Lumantas scored 11 and Tagupa added 10.

Erickson Araman paced Iligan with 17 while Alex Bognot added 16 and Aries Gloria 13.

The scores:

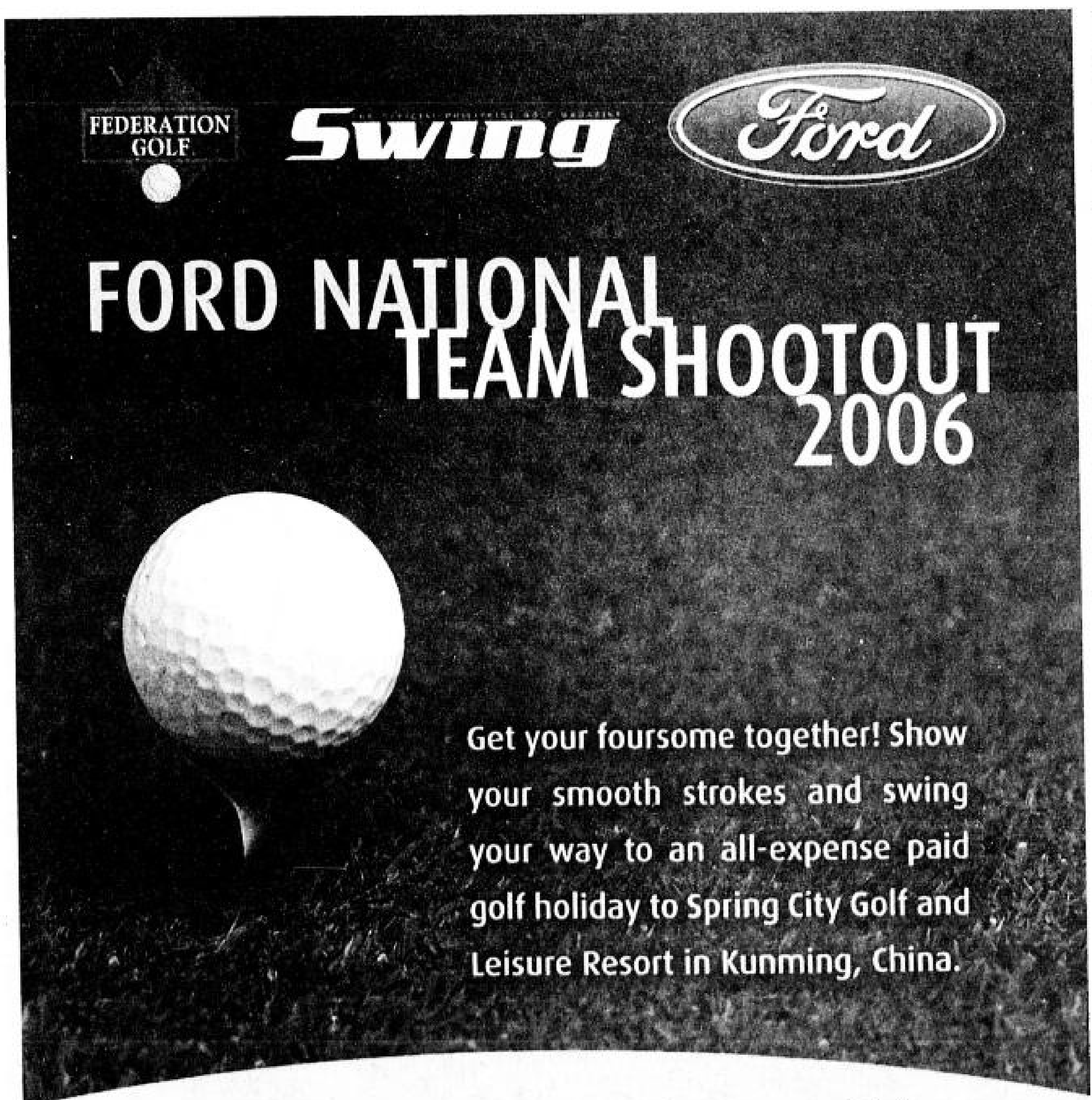
PRYCE PHARMA-MISOR 94—Alfeche 18, Mercado 16, Mendoza 13, Lumantas 11, Tagupa 10, Numeran 8, Carretas 7, Trumpeta 6, Saludsod 4, Redulosa 1, Acaylar 0, Rivera 0.

ILIGAN CITY 80—Araman 17, Bognot 16, Gloria 13, Tundag 8, Bagulo 8, Bangloy 5, Sereno 4, Pening 4, Cosingan 3, Pendang 2, Sapiler 0.

Quarters: 23-22, 48-38, 70-61, 94-80

VISAYAS DIVISION STANDINGS	W	L
M. Lhuillier-Cebu	3	0
Landmasters-Toledo	1	1
Toyota-Iloilo	0	1
Mantawi Traders	0	2
West Negros	x	x
MINDANAO DIVISION STANDINGS	**W**	**L**
Iligan City	4	1
PacMan-GenSan	5	2
Montaña-Davao	3	3
Pryce Pharma	3	4
Cagayan de Oro	0	5

GAME TODAY (*Maramag, Bukidnon*)
5:30 p.m.—Montaña Pawnshop-Davao vs Iligan City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April 1 & 2 - Orchard Golf & Country Club, Dasmariñas, Cavite
April 1 & 3 - Tagaytay Highlands Int'l. Golf Club, Tagaytay
April 2 - Eastridge Golf Club, Inc. Binangonan, Rizal
April 4-9 - Sta. Elena Golf Club, Sta. Rosa, Laguna
April 5 - Negros Occidental Golf & Country Club
April 6 - Forest Hills Golf & Country Club, Inc. Antipolo City
April 7 - Manila Southwoods Golf & Country Club, Carmona, Cavite
April 8 & 9 - Camp John Hay Golf Club, Baguio
April 9 - Iloilo Golf & Country Club, Iloilo
April 8 & 9 - Valley Golf & Country Club, Cainta, Rizal
April 8 - Wack-Wack Golf & Country Club, Mandaluyong
April 9 - Manila Golf & Country Club, Forbes Park
April 22 - Eagle Ridge Golf & Country Club, Gen. Trias, Cavite
April 22 - Canlubang Golf & Country Club, Canlubang, Laguna

Stage 2: Satellite Elimination in each district

Stage 3: Grand Finals

North Cotabato Braves stun host Taguig in NBC

TAGUIG CITY—NORTH COTABATO GOT back on the winning track by holding off host Forward Taguig, 71-68, Wednesday in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the CP Tinga gym here.

Edu Allado starred anew for Gov. Manny Pinol's Braves by firing 21 points, including back-to-back triples at the 7:18 mark of the final canto that gave North Cotabato a 69-55 advantage.

The Braves lost to Bacchus/Harbour Centre last Tuesday at the start of their northern swing in the tournament supported by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

"*Nanibago sila nuong unang game namin sa* (They were listless during our first game at) Lyceum," said North Cotabato coach Buboy Tanigue after his boys scored their third win in five games. "*Alam naming malakas ang* Taguig *kaya ang* instruction *ko, depensahan lahat* (We knew how tough Taguig is, so my instruction was to defend each one of them)."

Mayor Lawrence Cruz's Iligan Crusaders beat the Laguna Pistons of Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro, 83-75, in the other game.

The Crusaders banked on Marlon Kalaw, Ferdie Go and last year's MVP Chris Nicdao in scoring their third win in four games.

Kalaw, Go and Nicdao tallied 21, 15 and 14 points, respectively.

Yesterday's game at the Urdaneta Sports Center in Pangasinan pitting NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla's Spring Cooking Oil-Parañaque against Iligan and the Braves versus the Pangasinan Hundred Islands were still being played at press time.

The Cooking Oil Masters were gunning for their third straight win.

The scores:

ILIGAN 83—Kalaw 21, Go 15, Nicdao 14, Omiping 12, Hubalde 4, Gandarosa 3, Tagulnes 2, Ayodelle 2, Canoy 2, Espinosa 2, Matias 2.

LAGUNA 75—Nuqui 20, Roda 9, Intano 9, Proceso 7, Alminario 7, Nolasco 6, Domingo 6, Baylon 5, Natividad 4, Sy 2.

Quarters: 28-14, 50-33, 62-57, 83-75

N. COTABATO—Allado 21, Entrata 14, Clar 6, Martinez 6, Jawod 6, Regalado 4, Ligue 3, Cabanog 3, Binas 2, Culdora 2, Reyes 2, Dagatan 2, Tamayo 0, Del Norte 0.

TAGUIG 68—Vicoria 15, Reguera 12, Uy 9, Gragasin 9, Legaspi 8, Castro 5, Patrimonio 3, Lapinid 3, Abad 2, Lustistica 2, Dela Rosa 2, Dulay 0, Lozano 0, Santiago 0.

Quarters: 26-21, 37-36, 58-53, 71-68

Homegrown Cup features Ateneo-La Salle rivalry

THE PAST AND THE future of bitter rivals De La Salle and Ateneo clash at the resumption of the Total-Filoil-Flying V Homegrown Cup today at the San Juan gym.

The All-Stars clash at 2:30 p.m. after the 1 p.m. encounter between the schools' high school teams in the tournament sponsored by Globe and Shell and supported by Bank of Commerce, Banco de Oro, Flying V Biodiesel, Immuvit, Accel, Gerry's Grill, Millenium Plans, Inihaw Circle, PBComm and Security Bank.

The two squads occupy both ends of the pole. La Salle, behind Tony Boy Espinosa, Noli Locsin, Johnedel Cardel, Tyrone Bautista, Allen Patrimonio, Dwight Lago and Dominique Uy, is 2-0, having beaten Letran and Far Eastern University.

Ateneo, meanwhile, still has to make a dent after two games, and key Blue Eagle players Rainier Sison, Jimmy Tioseco, Epok Quimpo and Gene Afable face rough sailing against the fancied Green Archers.

But throw all statistics out the window. When these two universities meet, it's all about heart.

La Salle-Greenhills edged the Letran, 68-65, and demolished the FEU Baby Tamaraws 79-70, while the Ateneo Eaglets rebounded from a loss to the SBC Red Cubs by besting the Squires 70-65.

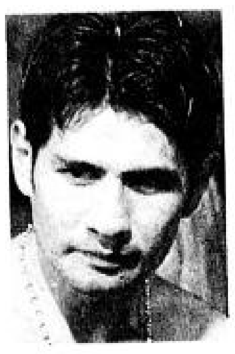
GAMES TODAY
(*San Juan Gym*)
1 p.m.—Ateneo vs La Salle (High School/All-Star)

GAMES TOMORROW
(*San Juan Gym*)
1 p.m.—San Beda vs Letran (HS/AS)
3 p.m.—UP vs FEU (HS/AS)

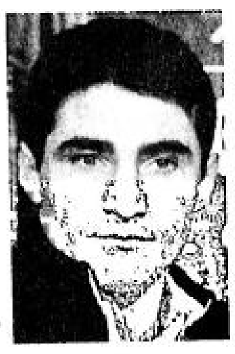
Pacquiao tiff lures Barrera, Morales

Ringside seats for Mexican legends

By Salven Lagumbay
Contributor



BARRERA



MORALES

EXPECT NO LESS THAN Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales to be at ringside when leathers start flying for the July 2 WBC International super featherweight championship fight between Manny Pacquiao and Mexico's Oscar Larios.

A source from the Manny Pacquiao Promotions intimated yesterday that Golden Boy Promotions, the promotional outfit which handles Barrera and Larios, wants no less than Barrera to be part of the television panel that will cover the title fight.

"Maybe Golden Boy Promotions wants to reveal the other side of Barrera, that of being a boxing analyst," the source said. "Of course, he (Barrera) will be doing the commentary in Spanish, since he hardly speaks English. And I think, that's an added attraction to the fight."

Eric Pineda, top man of the MPP, also revealed in a separate interview yesterday that Erik Morales would be invited by ABS-CBN to be at ringside for the fight.

The giant network, according to Pineda, will even offer Morales a slot in a Mexican telenovela for Filipino viewers.

One source, however, cautioned that Barrera's stint here will all depend on whether or not ABS-CBN, which bankrolls the fight, would allow a Mexican TV crew to do a live broadcast.

Barrera is slated to make a world title defense against former Olympian Rocky Juarez at the Staples Center in Los Angeles on May 20.

Barrera, nicknamed the "Baby-Faced Assassin," has a standing offer for a Nov. 4 bout with Pacquiao, but the RP boxing hero has a contract to fight Erik Morales in a rubber match in September or October.

The list of possible guests for the big card also includes Oscar De La Hoya, Bernard Hopkins, and possibly Mike Tyson or the great Muhammad Ali, whose classic "Thrilla in Manila" was also held at the Big Dome in 1975.

Laurente fails in Paba title bid

DENNIS LAURENTE OF THE PHILIPPINES failed in his bid for the Pan-Asian Boxing Association (Paba) light welterweight title when he lost by technical decision to Indonesian Daudy Bahari Thursday night at the Indosiar Studio in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Scores were 116-108, 115-110, 116-109, all for Bahari, although ringside reports from Indonesian media said referee Chalarm Prayadsab of Thailand made unusual two-point deductions from Laurente on two occasions.

Bahari, confused by Laurente's style, reportedly had a hard time against the Filipino fighter.

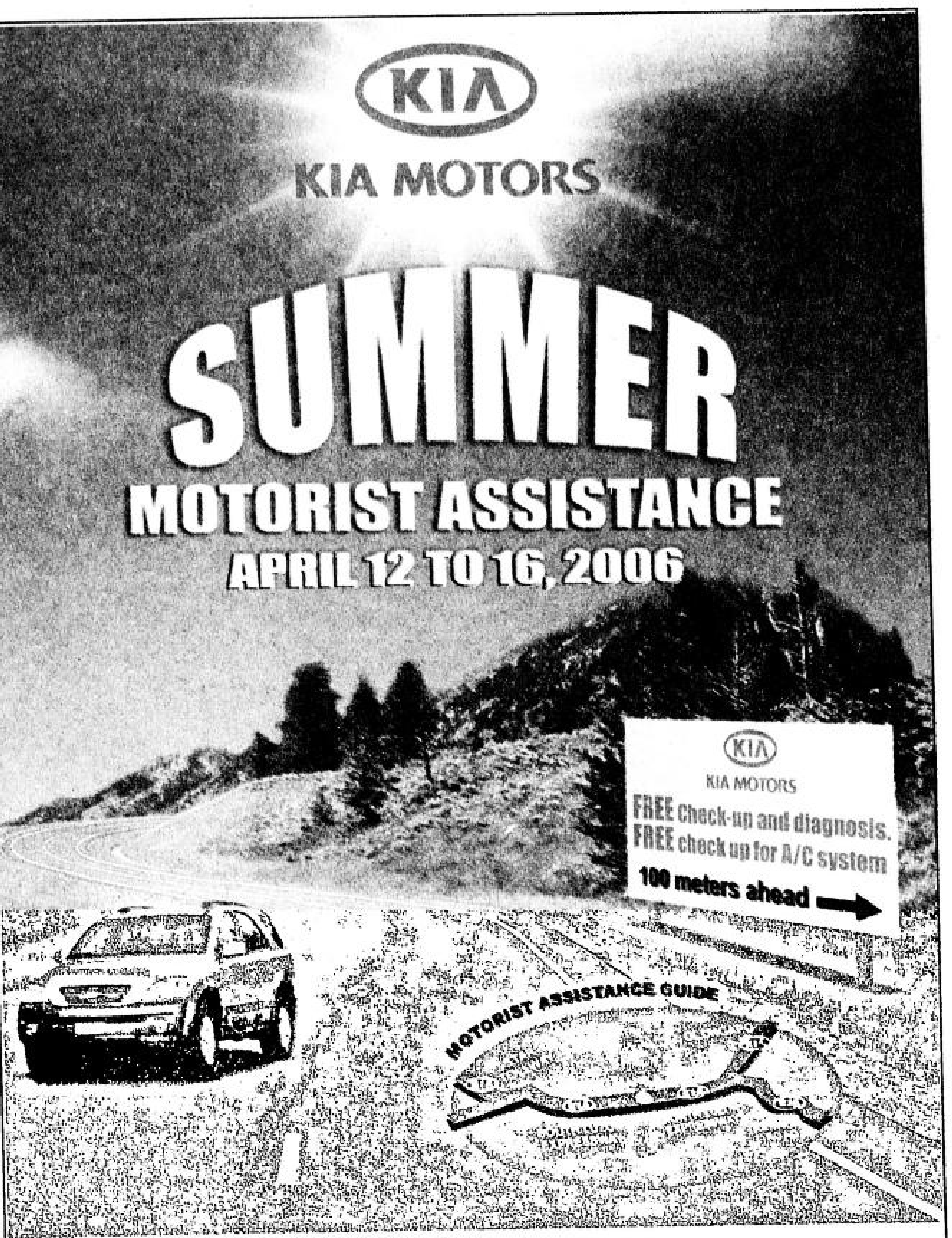
However, a two-point deduction was slapped by Prayadsab on Laurente in round nine following a clash of heads which resulted in a cut on Bahari's left eyelid.

Laurente pressed his attack in the 10th to 12th rounds hoping to score a knockout. To his surprise, the fight was stopped in the middle of the final round, and Prayadsab again took two points off Laurente for an "unintentional" headbutt.

Indon writer Jeffrey Pamungkas, reporting from ringside, said the deduction was "incorrect."

Pino Bahari, brother of Daudy and promoter of the fight, told this writer that the fight was stopped due to an intentional headbutt.

Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor



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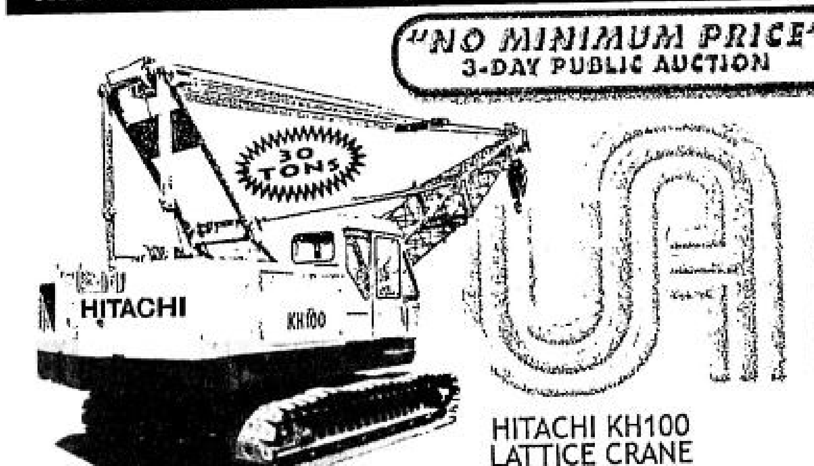

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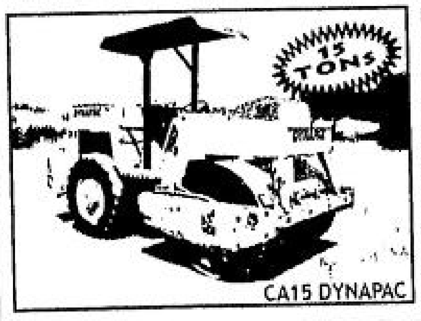

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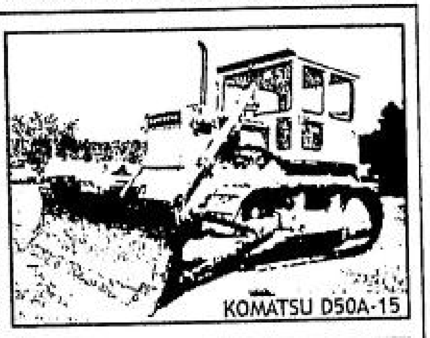

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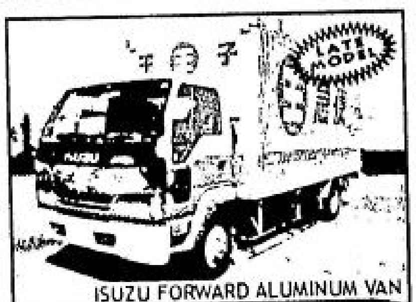

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Why Pacman and Kris are afraid of BIR

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

TODAY, YOU SEE Manny Pacquiao's face and form everywhere. Almost just as much as Kris Aquino's.

Like Kris, Manny is starting to build a huge fortune on product endorsements although, at this point, it's hard to tell who between the two is ahead in terms of revenue generated.

Admittedly, Kris is still the more visible. But that's probably because she's a woman with the face and the curves that are pleasant to the eye. I see more posters and billboards of Kris than I do of Manny.

However, I'm told by friends from advertising that Manny is starting to collect more revenue from ads than Kris. They say he is now more in demand than the quiz show host and can command a bigger talent fee because his market includes the rich and poor, young and old, male and female.

"Across the board," as marketing men would put it.

* * *

Out of curiosity, I tried to look for someone who could provide me a complete list of the products Kris is endorsing.

Since I couldn't find this person, I tried to recall the contents of the gift basket she gave media last Christmas, and her print and television commercials.

I can't remember the other cosmetics in the gift box, but I do recall the Kissa soap, the cans of San Miguel Beer and Purefoods Chunkee corned beef. I was looking for a Smart cellphone but there was none.

A fellow scribe who plies the route from Hagonoy, Bulacan to the Araneta Coliseum said Kris has much, much more product endorsements on outdoor billboards like Bench where she is portrayed seating atop husband James Yap. The scribe also vaguely remembers seeing Kris' bag and tile ads along Edsa, but doesn't remember the brand, which means it is not as effective as her other products which has stronger recall.

Kris and Manny are both endorsing San Miguel Beer and Smart, two of the biggest advertisers in the country. The two are together in a new San Miguel Beer commercial.

* * *

For Manny, I found just the right guy who could give me a complete list of his endorsements.

"Magnolia, McDonald's, Alaxan, Circulan, Darlington socks, Dolly Tuna, Smart, ML Kuwarta-Padala, Extreme Magic Sing, No Fear and MP Apparel (Manny Pacquiao)," recited Manny's marketing man Reli de Leon.

The total number is 11 and still growing, according to Reli.

I tried to get some numbers from him, but Reli is scared of the BIR.

Even Orville Roque and Heny Fabian, co-owners of The Astra Group, distributor of Extreme Magic Sing (handheld videoke microphone) would not reveal the amount they paid Pacman for a television ad that would run for 12 months.

"*Maliit lang*, nowhere near the talent fee San Miguel and Smart gave him," they said, explaining that Manny is an old friend.

Orville and Heny could also be scared of the BIR.

* * *

Yayoy Alcoseba, Cebu City councilor and Kwarta Padala coach, was just as mum on numbers as the others. Yayoy arrived in Manila last Thursday to oversee the production of the Michel Lhuillier Kwarta Padala television commercial, starring Pacman.

More importantly though, Yayoy is here to promote the Mindanao-Visayas Basketball Association (MVBA) which is being sponsored by Michel Lhuillier.

Yayoy said there are 10 teams in the MVBA, all of them former members of the NBC.

"But coming to Manila for the NBC games has become too costly for the Mindanao and Visayas teams, that's why we decided to form the MVBA where the games will be played in our turf. *Naka-save na kami* considerably, *marami pang nanonood*. In Manila, nobody ever watches our games which are played in practice venues," Yayoy said.

* * *

In a press statement he issued yesterday, BAP president Joey Lina said he would continue knocking on the POC door for reinstatement "until my knuckles hurt."

Frankly, I don't think that door will open even if Joey's knuckles eventually chip off. What will he do if it stays shut?

"I'll cross the bridge when I get there. The Holy Week is approaching, I will pray for enlightenment on the best course of action," Joey said.

In case he needs my help, I have a hotline to Papa Doc Duvalier.

Bayron top pick as C'tagan Open tees off

By Musong R. Castillo

CALATAGAN, BATANGAS—JAY BAYRON, an excellent second man in team play but never a major tournament winner in recent past, leads a crack field that tees off today in the third Calatagan Amateur Open presented by the Bank of Commerce here.

Bayron has played great in team events for the National team, the most recent being the gold medal conquest by the Filipinos over Singapore in the Southeast Asian Games last year.

But with Juvic Pagunsan, the first Calatagan Am winner in 2004, and Artemio Murakami now pros, Bayron, 26, has been picked by many as top prospect this time.

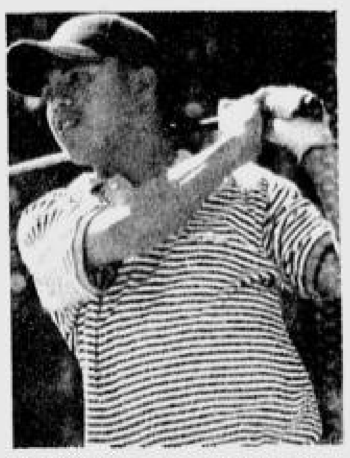
"Becoming the next RP Team spearhead is easier said than done," Bayron told the INQUIRER in Filipino after a practice round at the tough Robert Trent Jones creation yesterday. "I could be the most senior and experienced in the RP team pool, but that does not guarantee me anything."

Former RP Am champ and DHL winner Jun Bernis is also in the field, like Canlubang stalwarts Abe Rosal, Dave Hernandez and Tommy Manotoc.

National Caddies' Open product Joseph Labajo is the defending champion and other NCO bets in the field include Mark Fernando, Rufino Bayron, Paul Echavez, Zannie Boy Gialon and the champions the past two years—Jonel Ababa and Jessie Balasabas.

The crack field will have to contend with the heavily wooded and long par-72 layout, which has been in championship shape since the start of the year. The 36-hole tournament is actually the third major event to be held here after the Caddies' Open and the Kalachuchi Classic, the club's annual member-guest tournament last March 25.

La Salle football Hall-of-Famer Albert MG Garcia and Jimmy Zenarosa pocketed the overall team championship in the Kalachuchi after shooting a gross 72, while Jean Henri Lhuillier and guest Joey Reyes teamed up for 60 points and the overall net championship.



BAYRON: Easier said than done

MY GAMES

Tankers boost Binondo

MEDAL STANDINGS	G	S	B
Binondo	42	25	12
Paco	33	24	30
Pandacan	31	28	24
Dapitan	28	23	20
AbadSantos	23	23	11
Ka Maynila1	7	11	10
Malate	6	4	3
Dagupan	6	5	0
San Miguel	4	5	4
Velasquez	4	1	0
Sta. Cruz	3	3	2
Sta. Mesa	3	1	2
Ermita	2	5	8
Don Bosco	2	0	1
Sta. Ana	1	2	2
Gagalangin	1	0	1

By Marc Anthony Reyes

RUSSEL PLATA AND RENZ EVANGELISTA shone for the City College of Manila swimmers who boosted Binondo ahead in the 5th Manila Youth Games at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Aquatic Center yesterday.

The 16-year-old Plata lorded it over in the boys' 15-18 years 50-meter freestyle, 50-m butterfly, 50-m breaststroke, 50-m backstroke and 100-m free, while Evangelista topped the boys' 10 under 25-m fly, 25-m back, and 25-m free.

With CCM hauling in the most number of golds on the last day of swimming competitions with 10, Binondo raised its gold-silver-bronze tally of 42-25-12 which remains unsafe as the finals of most of the 14 sports disciplines are scheduled today.

Erstwhile leader Dapitan not only failed to cash in from the pool but in other fronts as well and slid to fourth place with a 28-23-20 count, behind Paco (33-24-30) and Pandacan (31-28-24) in the meet organized by the Manila Sports Council (Masco) chaired by Arnold "Ali" Atienza.

In athletics, Plaridel Elementary School's Raine Reyes took the gold in the boys' 12-under shotput, heaving the ball to a distance of 7.51 meters on his first try to beat schoolmate Aljie Andro (5.36m) and Daniel Gadia of Albert ES (4.91m).

Baseco's Ma. Gizela Bacanaya ruled the girls' 12-under shotput, besting teammate Jessica Orapa and R. Palma ES' Elisha Obedoza. Bacanaya threw 3.62m to rule the event over Orapa and Obedoza, who did 3.45m and 3.31m, respectively.

Randolph Hernandez of Letran captured the gold in the 16-17 shotput with an effort of 12.12m. He defeated Elezer Barcebal of District 4-Kamaynila (8.85m) and Jeric Masinsin of District 6 (8.11m).

Also scoring in the pool for CCM was Daniella de Castro, who snared the gold in the girls' 13-14 50-m fly and 50-m back in the Games presented by Converse with support from the PSC, Pagcor, San Miguel Corp., Super Ferry, Montana Pawnshop, Globe Telecoms, Milo, Air21, IntraSports, and Concept Movers.

"With two more days of action, we expect a more heated and spirited competition among the city's best in and out-of-school athletes," said Atienza.

Smokey Mountain-A nipped Smokey Mountain-B, 9-8, in the boys' baseball elementary division to take the gold medal while Antonio Villegas HS downed Smokey Mountain, 15-12, to top boys' baseball in the high school category.

QUICKEST: Irvin Fabellon (center) of Letran tops his heat of the 100-meter dash in yesterday's athletics competitions at the Rizal Memorial track oval. RYAN LIM

Unheralded Macala stuns Garma in nat'l finals; Villamayor scores

UNHERALDED ALLAN MACALA UPset International Master Chito Garma in the second round of the National Chess Championships Finals for men's and women's Friday at the Market Place Shopping Mall in Gen. Kalentong St., Mandaluyong City.

Macala, seeded 52nd, won with the black pieces after 83 moves of a Ruy Lopez Opening and with 2 points grabbed a share of the lead in the tournament serving as qualifier for the Chess Olympiad set in Turin, Italy, next month.

"*Tsamba lang* (I got lucky)," said Macala of Marikina, who beat Leo Zarrudo in the first round late Thursday.

Also posting their second straight victory in the men's side were third seed Grandmaster Bong Villamayor, sixth seed IM Ronald Dableo, IM Petronio Roca, NM Darwin Laylo, 12th seed IM Barlo Nadera and NM Fernandito Pialan.

The Singapore-based Villamayor crushed Jobannie Tabada after 54 moves of a Gruenfeld Defense and bolstered his bid to join seeded GMs Mark Paragua, Eugene Torre and Joey Antonio in the Philippine Olympiad team.

Dableo nipped NM Rolando Andador, Roca trounced Leodegario Ricana, Laylo outplayed Allan Cantonjos, Nadera bested NM Jake dela Cruz and Pialan beat IM Ronald Bancod.

Top seed GM Nelson Mariano, fourth seed IM Jayson Gonzales, fifth seed IM Richard Bitoon and 14th seed NM Edgardo Garma trailed at 1.5 points.

Mariano drew with NM Nicomedes Alisangco, Gonzales settled for a truce with Dino Ballecer, Bitoon split the point with NM Roland Joseph Perez and Garma halved the point with David Elorta.

In women's play, Mallorca Olympian WNM Loreshyl Cuizon beat Geneline de Ramos to share the lead with Shercila Cua and WNM Catherine Perena. They have 2.0 points each. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

Espiritu favored as CSI hits road

ARMYMAN VICTOR ESPIRITU SETS OUT AS the prohibitive favorite as he guns for a second straight victory in the Philamlife Cycling Search Invitational (CSI) Criterium Race which fires off today in Clark Field in Pampanga.

Espiritu, the former Asian and local tour king, turned in an impressive run the last time out where he bested fellow veteran campaigner Lloyd Reynante to capture the third leg honors in the men's elite and under-23 class of the monthly event presented by Philamlife.

Clark Dev't. Corp president Antonio Ng and Frank Madlangbayan, manager of CDC customer service department, will grace the event serving as the fourth stage of a 10-leg series organized by Treo Sales and Marketing Corp. to keep the country's bumper crop of riders in shape and at the same time discover fresh talents.

MOTO CHAMP: Jimboy Marcelo (center) of Team Total/Rudy Project/ Motoworld presents the Open Production and Open Enduro Championship trophies he won in the Narra Invitational Motocross and the Expert first runner-up trophies in the Puerto Princesa City Asian Motocross Championship both held recently in Palawan to Malou Espina, corporate affairs manager of Totalfinaelf Phils. Corp. Marcelo, the 2005 Enduro King and Open Enduro Rider of the Year, is also backed by Zeus Helmets and Sinisalo racewear. At right is team manager Engr Benjie Marcelo.

BRC drag racing revs up today

SOME 50 DRIVERS ARE EXPECTED TO COMpete for the titles at stake today as the Red Horse-PCSO National Drag Racing Championship Series launches its 2006 season at the drag strip of the Batangas Racing Circuit.

The country's finest drag racers will vie for honors in the Quick 8, the Pro class, Sportsman Class, Hot Street, and the Thunder Class for 1983 model cars or older.

But the bigger challenge of this event sponsored by Red Horse Beer, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and supported by Pilipinas Shell, Denso, Casino Filipino and Sparco is to beat the track record of 11.833 seconds set last year by Dave Jota of Blanche Racing.

BRC Drag Racing director Fil Gulfin urges all participants to join the driver's briefing at 8 a.m.

Leo Joel Cordero, the 2005 Golden Wheel Drag Racing Driver of the Year, is vying for back-to-back titles as he dons the colors of Blanche Racing, which also boast of two equally talented drivers Walter Pazon and Sheldon Chua.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Casanova (5), Concorde (2), Mas Que Nada (1), Valid Hazm (3)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Triple Threat (4), Humble Guest (1), Bobon Lancer (7), Pretty Pretty Girl (6)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Playing Cool (6), Power Of Longevity (5), Ikaw Pag-Asa Ko (3), Pulilan Beauty (1)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Native Land (4), Money Man (6), Tres Jeune (1), U Are My Sunshine (3)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Without Warning (3), Red Diamond (6), Baling Canda (2), High Spirit (1)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Thereshope (5), Atibida (2), Pentagon (7), Maximum Impact (2), Maawain/Oscar Awardee (1)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Mamaya (6), Puppy Dog Tail (3), Virginia (1), War Alert (4)
Race 8—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Il Amorosa (1), Remus (7), Time Deposit (10), Cool More (8), Distinctive Dancer (2)
Race 9—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Empire Lady (6), El Cid (5), Collective Dreams (9), Divine Right (8), Eden's Quest (1)
Race 10-(Penta/Qrt/Tri)-Key Element (6), Lucky Hoe (5), Shadowlax (8), Sharapova (1), Tiger Rally (1)
Race 11—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Anytime Anywhere (2), Pirouette (2), Reign Of Roses (5), Mano Po (6), American Idol (9)
Race 12—(Qrt/Tri)—Aminin (6), Blitzkrieg (5), Truly Impressive (7), Hurry Prince (8)
Race 13—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Leading Man (6), Express Strike (4), Habagat (7), Gentleman's Lady (3), Kalashnikov (2), Earth Angel (6)

SPORTSWATCH

Jaen VGB Firefly tops NCA derby

JAEN VGB FIREFLY WON ITS SEVENTH ROUND FIGHT WITH BR RIO THURSday at the Roligon Mega Cockpit to score 6 points and grab the championship in the NCA's first 7-cock derby for April. It was the first time in the history of the National Cockers Association that a provincial entry won the championship. Jaen VGB Firefly, owned by Ellan Nagano of Nueva Ecija, yielded to Binangonan Balbina of Ito Ynares in the fifth round. Jaen won all three fights in the first leg of the derby. Five of the entries tied for second place with five points each: Firefly RM 100, Pichay Spartans of Butch Pichay and Rey Briones Jade Resort of Arman Santos, Binangonan Balbina of Ito Ynares and Iggy Arroyo's Red Creek II. With 4.5 points were Wild wing Sundance of Ronnie Puno and Red Creek I, also of Arroyo. Mulawin AA of Rudy Albano and Jimmy Ang, and Lucky Rin Firefly Binangonan of Ric de Guzman posted 3.5 points each. The next NCA 7-cock derby at Roligon starts on April 18.

82 fights featured at Roligon

COCKFIGHT AFICIONADOS OF METRO MANILA WILL BE TREATED TO ANother exciting duel today at the 15,000-seat and newly renovated Roligon Mega Cockpit when the Allida Farms 4-cock derby blasts off at 4 p.m. with 82 fights. Awaiting the winners is P400,000 for an entry fee of P7,700. Meanwhile, Roligon's Tukaan 5-cock derby slated on April 29, May 2, 4 and 6 continues to draw participants. For reservation of cockhouses, all 851-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812 (look for Jona or Shirley). More than 200 cockers are expected to vie for P2 million in prizes. Entry fee is P8,800.

Big Las Piñas cockfest set today

INTERESTING MATCH-UPS OF PROMINENT COCKERS WILL BE THE highlight of Las Piñas Coliseum's Bigtime Bakbakan 5-cock derby today. The first of 80 fights sizzles at 4 p.m. *Sabong* idol Patrick Antonio takes on his perennial rival Sonny Lagon, the famous Sweater man; host Gerry Ramos will be pitted against Lito Orillaza of WTJ Group; world champion Boy de Roca goes up against Pol Estrellado and Mayor Nene Aguilar battles former Sen. Ramon Revilla. Coliseum manager Alex Tobias said that a cash prize of P1 million is at stake. For details, call 873-1040 and 874-3910.

2 Toyota cars for fastest winners

TWO BRAND NEW TOYOTA CARS, NOW ON DISPLAY AT MAKATI COLISEUM lobby, will be given away in the Summer Salpukan 6-cock derby on April 26, 29, May 2, 4, 6, 11 and 13. Sponsor is B-Meg. Derby ace promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co said that a Toyota Vios will go to the participant (running for champion only) with the fastest winning time. The Toyota Altis goes to the participant with the fastest combined winning time for six fights. The total prize is P4.4 million, including P3 million in cash. Entry fee is P11,000. Contact 896-3545 or 895-6475 (Joan or Stephanie).

Nets post 14th consecutive victory

NEW YORK—RICHARD JEFFERSON scored a season-high 40 points to help the New Jersey Nets extend their National Basketball Association winning streak to 14 games with a 113-102 victory over the Charlotte Bobcats on Thursday.

The Nets tied a franchise record for longest run of victories set in 2004, and broke a tie with Dallas for the NBA's longest winning streak this season.

Jason Kidd had his 74th career triple double for the Nets, picking up his last rebound in the final minute to complete his latest.

"I had about 300 people in my ear telling me about the rebound thing," New Jersey coach Lawrence Frank kidded reporters.

Kidd had 13 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds. The veteran ranks fourth in career triple doubles, now just four behind the great Wilt Chamberlin.

Jefferson scored 26 of his points in the second half and added 11 rebounds. Vince Carter added 20 points for the Nets.

Clifford Robinson added 14 points for the Nets, who rose to 46-28. The Nets have clinched the Atlantic Division title and have the third seed in the East. *Reuters*

COMPLETE RESULTS: Chicago 99, Philadelphia 92; Orlando 108, Milwaukee 105; Atlanta 101, Minnesota 99; Indiana 111, Toronto 103; Washington 108, Boston 91; NY Knicks 96, Cleveland 94; Oklahoma City 114, Golden State 109 (ot); Sacramento 97, San Antonio 87; Portland 76, Houston 75; LA clippers 119, Phoenix 105. **SOLAR Sports will air the Detroit-Orlando tussle at 7 a.m. today.** *Reuters*

KOBE Bryant looks up after being called for his fifth personal foul. AP

Euro attack fizzles out at Augusta

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—THE EUROPEAN challenge at the Masters got off to a sticky start Thursday with only David Howell managing to duck under par.

The ever-improving Englishman came in with a scrambling one-under 71 to stand four strokes off the lead set by Fiji's Vijay Singh.

Next best on even par were Spanish pair Miguel Angel Jimenez and Sergio Garcia alongside Sweden's Carl Pettersson and Darren Clarke of Northern Ireland.

Padraig Harrington of Ireland was on 73 alongside Thomas Bjorn of Denmark with the fancied Luke Donald and a battling Colin Montgomerie a further stroke back.

No European has won the Masters since Jose Maria Olazabal's second green jacket triumph in 1999, the same year Paul Lawrie won the British Open, the last time a European won a Major.

It was a disappointing day for other European Ryder Cup stars.

Lee Westwood was on 75, Spain's Olazabal had a 76, Sweden's Henrik Stenson, currently second on the European Order of Merit, slumped to a 77 and Ireland's Paul McGinley had a "horrendous" 78.

Veterans Nick Faldo, a three-time former winner here, and this year's Ryder Cup captain, Ian Woosnam of Wales, found the new lengthened course too much for them as they came in with 79 and 77 respectively.

Scotland's 1987 champion Sandy Lyle was even further down the field after carding an 80.

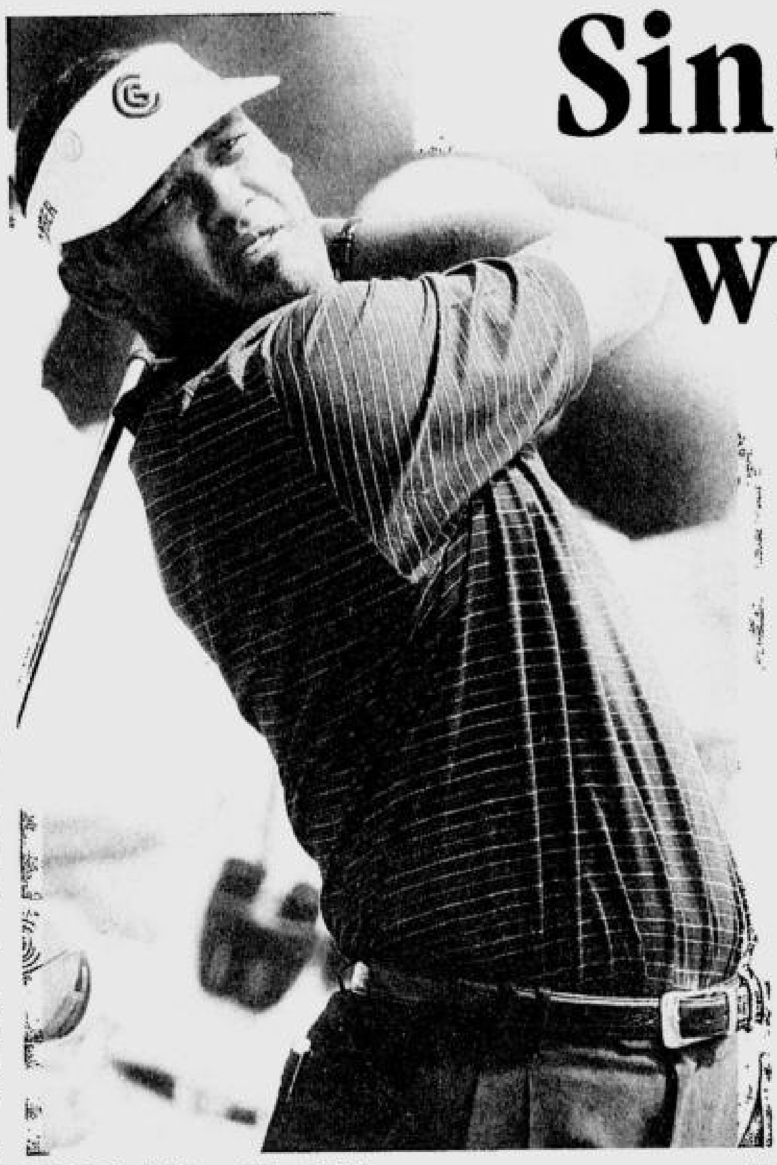
The 30-year-old Howell, who has moved into the world top 15 for the first time in his career, traded two bogeys against two birdies on his front nine and slipped back to level par with a bogey four at Amen Corner's par-three 12th.

But birdies at the 13th and 15th got him back into the red and he expressed satisfaction with his day's work.

Donald, a recent winner in the Honda Classic which bolstered the high regard he is held in the United States, started poorly with three bogeys in the first five holes.

He grabbed his one birdie of the day at the eighth to go out in 37 and came back in the same score after bogeying the 10th.

He was not too disappointed with his position after the opening round. *AFP*



VIJAY Singh drives off the 15th tee. AFP

Singh pulls ahead with 5-under 67

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—VIJAY SINGH was at the top of the Masters leaderboard. No surprise there.

Phil Mickelson was right in the mix. That's to be expected.

Tiger Woods got off to a sluggish start at Augusta National. Sounds about right.

Still, there were plenty of surprises on Day 1: Rocco Mediate and Arron Oberholser were Singh's closest challengers, and Ben Crenshaw—who was talking retirement a day earlier—put himself in contention with a stunning round.

Showing no regard for the longer, tougher course, Singh put up a bogey-free, 5-under 67 that gave him a one-shot lead over Mediate on Thursday. Oberholser, a Masters rookie, was another shot back.

"I played pretty decent," Singh said. "I didn't make too many mistakes. I had a lot of chances early on and I putted very well."

Mickelson shot 70, part of a group three strokes off the lead that included two-time US Open champion Retief Goosen.

Mickelson said it's much easier to play the Masters now that he's a past champion, having won in 2004 when he captured his first major title. He added the US PGA Championship last year.

Singh and Mediate had something in common. They were the first two players to make birdies on the 11th hole, a tough test that became even harder when Augusta National decided to lengthen its course to 7,445 yards—the second-longest in major championship history behind Whistling Straits.

That's where the similarities end.

Singh is a three-time major champion who won the Masters in 2000. Mediate qualified for Augusta based on a sixth-place finish at the US Open last summer. Otherwise, he's been mired in one of the worst slumps of his career, finishing 114th on the money list a year ago—an improvement on his 176th-place showing in 2004.

Oberholser didn't have high expectations coming into his first Masters, and his attitude remained the same after he shot 69.

Woods, the defending champion, came in as an overwhelming favorite to win his fifth green jacket—only Jack Nicklaus has more—and felt good about his opening 72.

Woods finished strong with a birdie at No. 18, leaving him solidly in contention. *AP*

Tiger doing good sans his father

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—TIGER Woods was on his own at the US Masters on Thursday and did just fine battling his way to an opening round even par 72, five off the early leader Vijay Singh, at a sun-kissed Augusta Golf Club.

For the first time in 12 Masters, Woods did not have his ailing father Earl in Augusta to offer him support and guidance and on a few occasions appeared lost as he made his way around the muscled up 7,445 yard layout.

As Masters week began it was uncertain if Woods would be at the first tee on Thursday with his father back in California battling cancer.

Having jetted home on the eve of the Players' Championship to check on his father, Woods did not rule out the possibility of doing the same at the Masters if he was needed in California.

The world number one's renowned powers of concentration were put to the supreme test on Thursday, as he pushed concern for his father to the back of his mind for a few hours and focused on tackling a course stretched to the second longest in major championship history.

Despite having claimed three Masters titles in the last five years, the course and conditions were as unfamiliar to Woods as they were to the rest of the field after four years of alterations and rainy weather.

"I thought at the beginning of the day there might be two scores in the 60s today," said Woods, who has three wins in seven starts this season.

"We haven't played it like this for a while where it's been dry like this. Today it was quick and dry and they greens are picking up speed." Chasing a fifth US Masters, Woods moved to one under by spectacularly holing an eight-iron from the fairway for an eagle-two at the 14th.

However, he then ran up a double-bogey seven on 15, where he found water with his approach, before finishing in style with a 35-foot birdie putt at the last. *Reuters*

TIGER Woods reacts to his shot on the 11th. AP

STARS FOR STARS: World No. 1 Roger Federer and US Open champion Kim Clijsters take center stage at Stars for Stars award ceremony of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) and the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour.

Taiwan wins Queen Sirikit; RP ladies share 10th place

ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA—Three taiwan golfers parred the first playoff hole Friday while New Zealand had a par and two bogeys, giving the Asian team the Queen Sirikit Cup women's amateur trophy.

The New Zealand trio of Natasha Krishna, Sarah Nicholson and Sharon Ahn went into the final round with a five-shot lead at Royal Adelaide Golf Club, but finished level with Taiwan on 17-over-par 449 after 54 holes.

Krishna sunk a birdie putt to force the playoff after the teams were equal going into the 18th.

The Philippines shared 10th place with Singapore at 497.

Nicholson and Taiwan's Choi Heyong parred the first playoff hole but Ahn and Krishna both had bogeys while Yu Peilin and Hseih Yuling had pars for Taiwan to clinch the victory.

Hur Mi-jung of South Korea won the individual competition, closing with a 67 and a 6-under total of 220. Krishna was second at 221 after a 73 Friday.

The Queen Sirikit Cup includes teams from 13 Asia-Pacific countries including 3rd placer South Korea (455), Australia (462), Thailand (467), Japan (470), China (473), Malaysia (473), India (486), Hong Kong (504) and Sri Lanka (506). *AP*

Hewitt lifts Australia to 2-0 lead over Belarus in Davis Cup q'final

MELBOURNE—AUSTRALIA SEIZED control of their Davis Cup quarterfinal with Belarus on Friday when Lleyton Hewitt and Chris Guccione won their opening singles matches at Kooyong in Melbourne.

Hewitt demolished Vladimir Voltchkov, 6-2, 6-1, 6-2, in just 91 minutes to give the hosts a commanding 2-0 lead after Guccione had upset Max Mirnyi, 7-6, 3-6, 7-5, 3-6, 6-4, in a see-saw match that lasted nearly four hours.

Guccione shot to fame by winning the deciding rubber in Australia's first round win over Switzerland last month when Hewitt declared himself unavailable.

The towering left-hander proved he was no one-hit wonder with a stirring victory over Mirnyi that featured 20 aces.

"It's the biggest win of my career," he said in a televised interview.

Australia's non-playing captain John Fitzgerald said Guccione's surprise victory had given the team the perfect platform to go on and win the best-of-five tie and set up a semifinal meeting with either Croatia or Argentina. *Reuters*

LLEYTON Hewitt celebrates a point. REUTERS

India, Brazil among bidders for 2016 Games

SEOUL—SIX COUNTRIES FROM four continents are already interested in bidding for the 2016 Summer Olympics, the International Olympic Committee said on Friday.

IOC chief Jacques Rogge said the candidature period for cities to bid for these Games will open up in 2008 with a decision in 2009.

"There are six countries interested," Rogge told reporters after the end of the IOC's executive board meeting.

He said so far that India, Japan, Spain, the United States and Brazil had expressed an interest. Italy is also considering a bid.

He said this was not a formal candidature yet but a preliminary interest by the countries.

South America has never hosted the Olympics.

India, the second largest country by population and a rapidly emerging global power, has also never won the bid to stage the Games.

The next summer Games will be held in Beijing in 2008 while London will host the Olympics in 2012. *Reuters*

Leviste, Malalad pursuing Asiad gold medal quest

THEY CAME A FEW POINTS SHORT OF BAGging the gold in the 2002 Asian Games in Busan, South Korea.

Today, Toni Leviste of equestrian and Gretchen Malalad of karate are raring to complete their unfinished business in the quadrennial meet.

A tough field awaits them in Doha, Qatar, for the 15th edition of the Asiad later this year, but Leviste and Malalad expressed readiness to do battle in the Dec. 1-15 meet.

"I'm very committed to compete in the Asian Games, where I wanted to win the gold," said Malalad yesterday as she shared the limelight with Leviste in the SCOOP sa Kamayan session in Padre Faura in Manila. "I have some unfinished business to do."

"There definitely will be an awesome field in Doha, because unlike in Busan, Middle East countries like Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, among others, will be there," said Leviste, adding that the quarantine issue that affected the world horseracing industry had forced some of the equestrian powerhouse teams to skip the last Asiad.

The charming duo were among the few national players who brought home a medal from the Busan Asiad.

Leviste was part of the all-women equestrian squad that won the silver medal in the team competition while the 26-year-old Malalad salvaged a kumite bronze in the 60 kg class despite a dislocated shoulder.

They have earned outright berths in the Doha Asiad for their respective medal feats, including winning gold medals in the last 23rd Southeast Asian Games here.

Caltex gives summer bakasyonistas a Clean Getaway

After a particularly hectic first quarter of the year and exceptionally hot days, Filipinos are sure to be revved up for a much-needed holiday during the Holy Week break. There are many things people can depend on during this time; clearer, traffic-free roads, overcrowded vacation spots and of course, Caltex's signature service all through the summer.

Caltex Clean Getaway is a series of activities geared towards making traveling for Filipino vacationers as problem-free and as rewarding as possible for those who make it a point to pass by Caltex stations on the way to their destinations.

Summer Service
Caltex stations will be open and ready to service vehicles that pass through, giving them the excellent Pit Crew Experience which should keep cars running without hassles throughout the trip. The friendly and accommodating Caltex forecourt attendants will always be ready with a smile and their expertise in keeping engines running and car bodies shining.

Sticking up for Motorists
The Clean Getaway activities started off with a stickering campaign last March 31, 2006. Cars that passed by Caltex were given special stickers which would qualify their drivers for cool giveaways during the holiday break when they pass by Caltex.

Free Maintenance Check-up
Caltex stations with Xpress Lubes will be offering a Free 22-point maintenance check-up on cars before they hit the road.
Drivers of Isuzu vehicles will be glad to know that there will be free special car check-ups for their rides courtesy of Isuzu Motors.
There will also be free Tire Checks from Goodyear.

Roadside Rescue
Motorists can also count on the following services from Caltex: Motolite Free Battery check-up and service, Red Cross first aid stations and Free Towing service at selected Caltex stations. The Radio Groups are a joint MMDA and Metrowatch Operation that will give roadside assistance in case of vehicular accidents and monitor conditions on the highways.

A Star Mart for all Reasons
Get a free Coke in can for every purchase of one (1) Globe sim card or every purchase of P100 worth of prepaid call card.

Star Mart will also be open for bakasyonistas who need much-needed supplies, emergency items or just a quick snack on the run. Various products will also be available as giveaways or special promos.

Freebies, Cool Treats and Hot Eats
Free samples of refreshing Unif Green Tea will be given and delicious Homi Noodles will be available at a special holiday price.

The Cool Air Dip Trip Promo from Wrigley's will give customers the chance to join an Instant Prize Dip Challenge. By presenting any Cool Air wrapper at the designated booth, customers will be able to reach for a freebie inside a drum filled with ice water.

For every purchase of two Nestle products, customers will get a FREE Nestle Iced Tea 6.5oz. which they can claim at the Nestle booth.

The Famous Raisin and Banana Breads made by the chefs of the Baguio Country Club will be permanently available starting this summer at the following Star Mart stores: Baguio-Burnham, Legarda, Upper Session Road and Rosario, La Union.

Kenny Rogers at Caltex NLEX station will be giving customers their favorite muffin FREE every time they gas up for a minimum of P500 worth of Caltex fuels with Techron® plus any food and drink purchase from April 7 to May 28, 2006.

At McDonald's at Caltex SLEX station, customers will get a McDonald's Card FREE for a minimum food purchase of P150. This card qualifies customers for monthly freebies and a 10% discount on party packages at participating McDonald's outlets. This promo lasts until May 31, 2006.

Beating the Sun
Every purchase of Beach Hut will let a customer avail of Air2tattoo service. There will also be a Sunblock Challenge with a photo shoot to be conducted by Beach Hut girls.

Summer Surfing
Just because you're not at your desk doesn't mean you have to be out of touch with the Worldwide Web. There will be Free Web Surfing and WiFi access via Airborne Access at the Caltex NLEX and SLEX stations. So bring along those mobiles and laptops!

Channel Surfing
QTV Channel 11 will be sending their teams in the field at selected Caltex stations to give free medical assistance and refreshments to motorists. They will also be giving out information about popular holiday and vacation spots as well as nice freebies for lucky vacationers. Look for the QTV tent and the large plasma screen TV which will show off the shows Balikbayan and At Your Service for free viewing.

Ready for Summer
With every Caltex station choc-full of cool freebies, giveaways, promos and treats to enjoy, holiday goers would do well to make it a point to pass by and make a Clean Getaway with Caltex this summer!

Uni-President

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SATURDAY Special

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CRUZ AND HAYEK. Refreshing partnership.

NOW SHOWING

Hayek-Cruz tandem exudes Latina sizzle and spice

By Rito P. Asilo

"Bandidas"

D: Joachim Roenning, Espen Sandberg
S: Salma Hayek, Penelope Cruz, Steve Zahn, Sam Shepard

SALMA HAYEK AND Penelope Cruz play constantly bickering Mexican vixens—as rich, European-bred Sara and poor farm girl, Maria, respectively—who turn to robbing banks in 19th century Mexico as part of a plot to thwart the evil plans of Jackson Tyler (Dwight Yoakam), a sly, trigger-happy businessman from New York, who's in town on a land-grabbing spree.

After their respective fathers are downed by the gun-toting Yankee and his praetorian underlings, the feisty feminine duo decides to team up—personal and class differences notwithstanding.

Then, they undergo stamina-building, confidence-boosting training under the weary, watchful eye of an Obi Wan Kenobi-like American outlaw (Sam Shepard).

The plot thickens when New York detective, Quentin (Steve Zahn), Jackson's nerdy brother-in-law (who has a knack for "C.S.I."-type forensics), joins the wacky fray to help capture the slithery *bandidas*.

What Jackson doesn't count on is losing Quentin's loyalty and expertise to the beautiful renegades' noble cause—especially after the latter's sizzling 10-minute kissing romp with Sara and Maria!

With spurts of adrenaline-pumped action sequences and visual inventiveness that characterize the films of French auteur, Luc Besson (who wrote the script), the gorgeous Latino tandem of Cruz and Hayek energizes the screen with sizzle and spice.

But, the ladies' antics soon become a bore—and noisy banter. The actresses' refreshing chemistry and their directors' impressive visual style initially make the movie watchable, but its flawed, trite script soon pushes it down the rabbit hutch of mediocrity.

DE RAVIN. Detour to violence and gore.

"The Hills Have Eyes"

D: Alexandre Aja
S: Dan Byrd, Vinessa Shaw, Emilie De Ravin

Once again, Alexandre Aja ("High Tension") pushes the boundaries of screen violence in his reworking of Wes Craven's 1977 slasher flick, and surprisingly delivers a serviceable remake—another blood-soaked contribution to Hollywood's current "horror porn" film trend that saw Eli Roth's "Hostel" and James Wan and Darren Lynn Bousman's "Saw" movie franchise vanquish the competition at the box office recently.

When the Carter family—dad, mom, son, two daughters, son-in-law and granddaughter—takes a detour from the usual route on their way to San Diego, they find themselves stranded in the middle of the Nevada desert.

Soon, they fall prey to a psychopathic horde of flesh-eating mutant humanoids, who have been physically deformed by the radioactive fallout that ensued during the US military's nuclear tests between 1945 to 1962. The script, though, doesn't explain the mental pathology of the nuclear meltdown's victims.

Although nothing in the film's narrative exposition is original (scary-movie clichés abound), Aja makes it work with a storytelling style that is characterized by fast, frenetic pacing, engaging camerawork, glossy photography, and psychological, seminal musings about man's disregard for his environment.

These elements give the production an eerie atmosphere of doom, gloom and cautionary dread. The movie raises the bar for the slasher-flick genre—but, that's *not* necessarily a good thing for the violence-shy moviegoer.

Paris Bennett, teen survivor

By Nestor U. Torre

THIS YEAR'S "AMERICAN IDOL" HAD 16- and 17-year-olds among its 12 finalists—Kevin Covais, Lisa Tucker and Paris Bennett. Their having survived the rigorous competition up to the finals was a tribute, not just to their singing talent, but also to their tenacity, determination and coolness under fire.

The "AI" tilt is a daunting challenge even for its much older and experienced finalists, so it must be a lot more difficult for the three teenagers. They have had to summon up extraordinary reserves of discipline, fortitude and precocious maturity to survive the extreme tension and competition.

Teen contenders

But, as the finals head for their last round, the teen contenders' best efforts have proven to be not good enough to ensure their survival.

The first teen to bite the dust was Kevin, the tilt's lovable "Chicken Little" lookalike. Despite his winning ways, Kevin fell by the wayside a couple of weeks ago.

Then, a week later, it was Lisa's turn to bid the competition goodbye. This was a big surprise, because Lisa was one of the tilt's strongest bets during its earlier rounds.

With Kevin and Lisa out of the way, that leaves only Paris still in there, doing her best to survive up to the very end. Will she turn out to be the exception that proves the "rule" that teen contestants are inherently at a disadvantage in a tough, take-no-prisoners singing competition like "American Idol"?

Paris' many fans believe that she's got what it takes to go the distance, despite her youth. Of course, naysayers beg to disagree—like juror Simon Cowell, who trenchantly observed that, when she was asked to do a sultry number, Paris looked like a kid playing dress-up in her mother's clothes and wig.

BENNETT. Grew up with music for mother's milk.

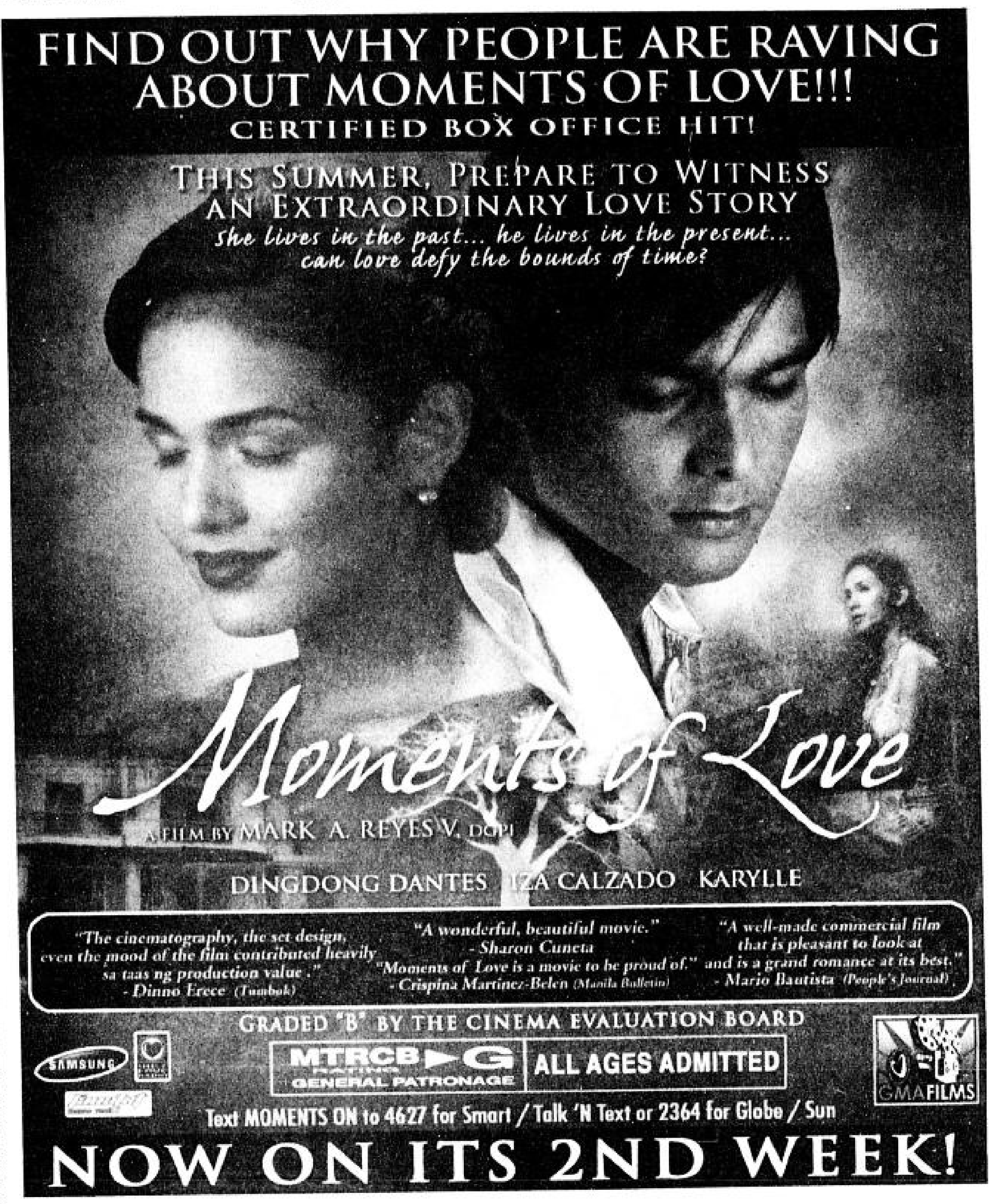
For our part, we like Paris because she is a creative performer who doesn't just change her singing style to suit a particular song, but also bothers to "totalize" an appropriate look for each number she tackles.

Finalist

Thus, she has variously come across as an ingenue, a '40s chanteuse, a Billie Holiday clone, a sassy diva, a singing cheerleader, and a groovy teen! Paris is one finalist who obviously doesn't take her survival chances for granted.

Perhaps that's because she's a third-generation performer—her grandmother was one of the toasts of Tin Pan Alley during her time. Having grown up with music for mother's milk. Paris is aware of the tough work and guts required to make it in the biz, then and now.

Despite this sunny-faced toughness, there's no assurance that Paris will still be standing after the "final-finals" smoke clears. Still, she's giving the competition everything she's got, despite her youth. —Paris sizzles!



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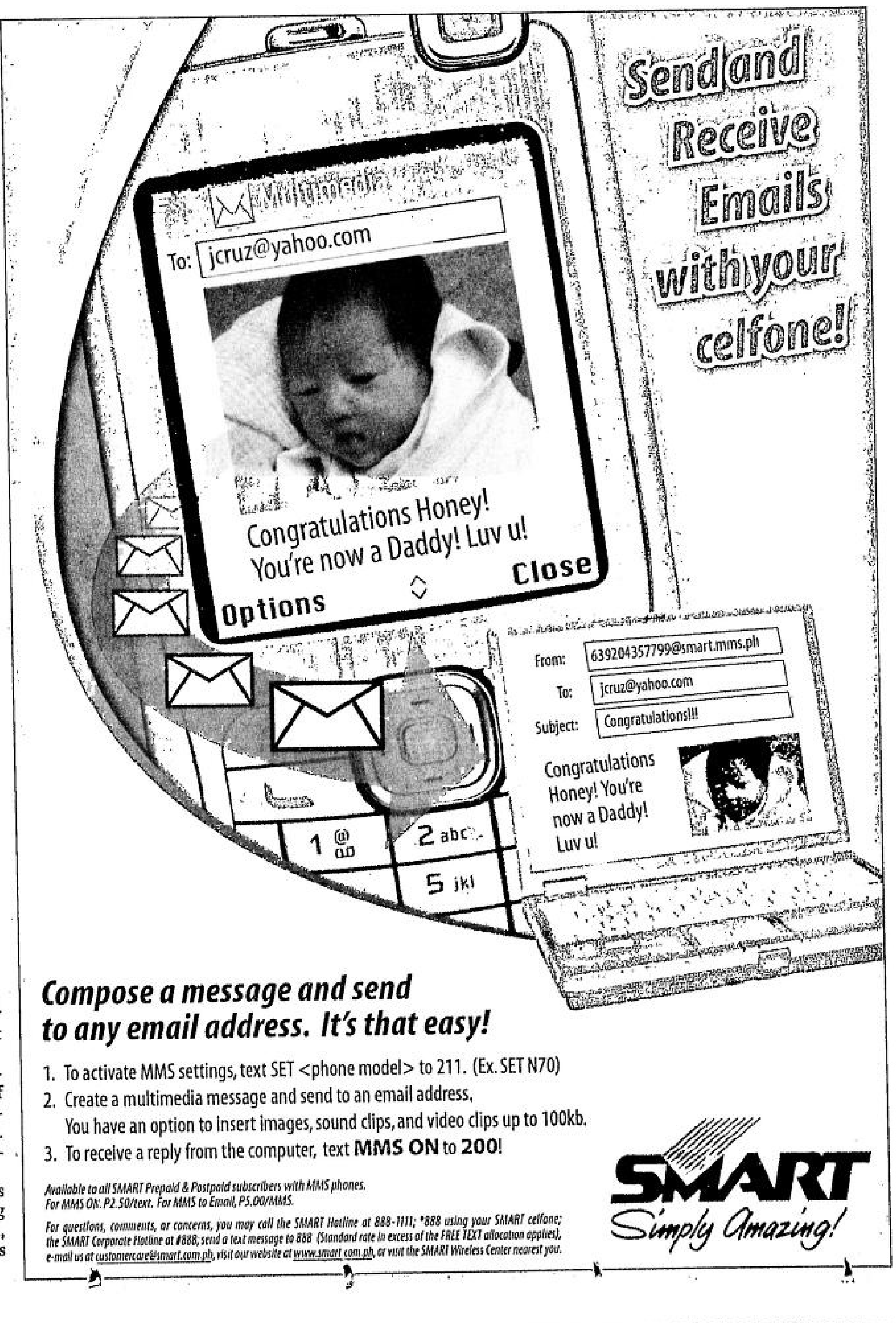

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Editor **Nestor U. Torre**
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SATURDAY Special

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CRUZ AND HAYEK. Refreshing partnership.

NOW SHOWING

Hayek-Cruz tandem exudes Latina sizzle and spice

By Rito P. Asilo

"Bandidas"

D: Joachim Roenning, Espen Sandberg
S: Salma Hayek, Penelope Cruz, Steve Zahn, Sam Shepard

SALMA HAYEK AND Penelope Cruz play constantly bickering Mexican vixens—as rich, European-bred Sara and poor farm girl, Maria, respectively—who turn to robbing banks in 19th century Mexico as part of a plot to thwart the evil plans of Jackson Tyler (Dwight Yoakam), a sly, trigger-happy businessman from New York, who's in town on a land-grabbing spree.

After their respective fathers are downed by the gun-toting Yankee and his praetorian underlings, the feisty feminine duo decides to team up—personal and class differences notwithstanding.

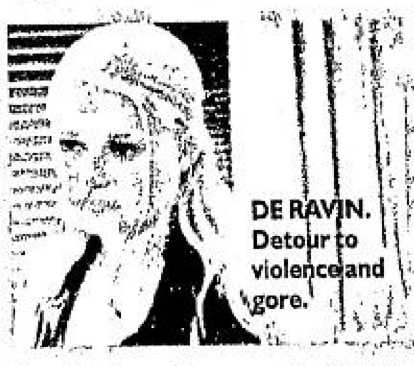
Then, they undergo stamina-building, confidence-boosting training under the weary, watchful eye of an Obi Wan Kenobi-like American outlaw (Sam Shepard).

The plot thickens when New York detective, Quentin (Steve Zahn), Jackson's nerdy brother-in-law (who has a knack for "C.S.I."-type forensics), joins the wacky fray to help capture the slithery *bandidas*.

What Jackson doesn't count on is losing Quentin's loyalty and expertise to the beautiful renegades' noble cause—especially after the latter's sizzling 10-minute kissing romp with Sara and Maria!

With spurts of adrenaline-pumped action sequences and visual inventiveness that characterize the films of French auteur, Luc Besson (who wrote the script), the gorgeous Latino tandem of Cruz and Hayek energizes the screen with sizzle and spice.

But, the ladies' antics soon become a bore—and noisy banter. The actresses' refreshing chemistry and their directors' impressive visual style initially make the movie watchable, but its flawed, trite script soon pushes it down the rabbit hutch of mediocrity.



DE RAVIN. Detour to violence and gore.

"The Hills Have Eyes"

D: Alexandre Aja
S: Dan Byrd, Vinessa Shaw, Emilie De Ravin

Once again, Alexandre Aja ("High Tension") pushes the boundaries of screen violence in his reworking of Wes Craven's 1977 slasher flick, and surprisingly delivers a serviceable remake—another blood-soaked contribution to Hollywood's current "horror porn" film trend that saw Eli Roth's "Hostel" and James Wan and Darren Lynn Bousman's "Saw" movie franchise vanquish the competition at the box office recently.

When the Carter family—dad, mom, son, two daughters, son-in-law and granddaughter—takes a detour from the usual route on their way to San Diego, they find themselves stranded in the middle of the Nevada desert.

Soon, they fall prey to a psychopathic horde of flesh-eating mutant humanoids, who have been physically deformed by the radioactive fallout that ensued during the US military's nuclear tests between 1945 to 1962. The script, though, doesn't explain the mental pathology of the nuclear meltdown's victims.

Although nothing in the film's narrative exposition is original (scary-movie clichés abound), Aja makes it work with a storytelling style that is characterized by fast, frenetic pacing, engaging camerawork, glossy photography, and psychological, seminal musings about man's disregard for his environment.

These elements give the production an eerie atmosphere of doom, gloom and cautionary dread. The movie raises the bar for the slasher-flick genre—but, that's *not* necessarily a good thing for the violence-shy moviegoer.

Paris Bennett, teen survivor

By Nestor U. Torre

THIS YEAR'S "AMERICAN IDOL" HAD 16- and 17-year-olds among its 12 finalists—Kevin Covais, Lisa Tucker and Paris Bennett. Their having survived the rigorous competition up to the finals was a tribute, not just to their singing talent, but also to their tenacity, determination and coolness under fire.

The "AI" tilt is a daunting challenge even for its much older and experienced finalists, so it must be a lot more difficult for the three teenagers. They have had to summon up extraordinary reserves of discipline, fortitude and precocious maturity to survive the extreme tension and competition.

Teen contenders

But, as the finals head for their last round, the teen contenders' best efforts have proven to be not good enough to ensure their survival.

The first teen to bite the dust was Kevin, the tilt's lovable "Chicken Little" lookalike. Despite his winning ways, Kevin fell by the wayside a couple of weeks ago.

Then, a week later, it was Lisa's turn to bid the competition goodbye. This was a big surprise, because Lisa was one of the tilt's strongest bets during its earlier rounds.

With Kevin and Lisa out of the way, that leaves only Paris still in there, doing her best to survive up to the very end. Will she turn out to be the exception that proves the "rule" that teen contestants are inherently at a disadvantage in a tough, take-no-prisoners singing competition like "American Idol"?

BENNETT. Grew up with music for mother's milk.

Paris' many fans believe that she's got what it takes to go the distance, despite her youth. Of course, naysayers beg to disagree—like juror Simon Cowell, who trenchantly observed that, when she was asked to do a sultry number, Paris looked like a kid playing dress-up in her mother's clothes and wig.

For our part, we like Paris because she is a creative performer who doesn't just change her singing style to suit a particular song, but also bothers to "totalize" an appropriate look for each number she tackles.

Finalist

Thus, she has variously come across as an ingenue, a '40s chanteuse, a Billie Holiday clone, a sassy diva, a singing cheerleader, and a groovy teen! Paris is one finalist who obviously doesn't take her survival chances for granted.

Perhaps that's because she's a third-generation performer—her grandmother was one of the toasts of Tin Pan Alley during her time. Having grown up with music for mother's milk. Paris is aware of the tough work and guts required to make it in the biz, then and now.

Despite this sunny-faced toughness, there's no assurance that Paris will still be standing after the "final-finals" smoke clears. Still, she's giving the competition everything she's got, despite her youth. —Paris sizzles!

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SMART Simply Amazing!

EWTN marks 25th year

By Nestor U. Torre

THE ETERNAL WORD TELEVISION Network (EWTN) is marking its 25th anniversary this year, and we join Catholics the world over in thanking the religious network (Channel 60 on SkyCable) for its inspiring and instructive religious programming.

We also pray that EWTN's founder, the "unsinkable" Mother Angelica, will continue to regain the full use of her faculties, so that she can eventually resume hosting her unique talk show on the TV network that she founded a quarter of a century ago.

Determination

EWTN's success is especially inspiring because the network was launched with little money—but, with a whole lot of heart and determination to spread the Eternal Word of Jesus Christ.

Mother Angelica was so determined to keep the religious TV channel on the air that she didn't think it beneath her to "beg" for donations from viewers to keep the station going.

Her faith in Divine Providence was ultimately rewarded with the channel's prodigious progress through the years, all the way up to the present (it now enjoys a viewership of 80 million worldwide).

Mother Angelica has been sidelined by illness and no longer runs EWTN, but the TV station continues to spread God's word with the help of new visionaries who have stepped into the breach. This, again, is a clear sign of Divine Providence at work.

Aside from doing its work admirably well, EWTN also serves as a shining example for other prospective Catholic broadcasters to similarly launch religious radio-TV stations to serve the spiritual needs of the people in their respective regions.

Technology

All too often, clergy and lay leaders balk at using the media to disseminate God's word because they aren't familiar with the technology, and broadcasting *can* be expensive.

Well, when she started EWTN, Mother Angelica was also "poor" and tech-leery, but she was able to overcome those handicaps with God's help and the strength of her spiritual convictions—and look where EWTN is now!

MOTHER ANGELICA. "Unsinkable" founder.

Let's hope that clergy and lay leaders in the Philippines are heartened by EWTN's triumph over adversity, and launch their own media initiatives.

Colleagues

We trust, too, that Mother Angelica will eventually rejoin her colleagues at EWTN. She was miraculously healed once before—and it can happen again!

Meanwhile, EWTN at 25 years "young" continues to do God's work on TV—and the world is a better place due to its inspired and inspiring ministrations.

If you belive that a religious dimension is important in the lives of men, why don't you tune in to SkyCable Channel 60, and savor the spiritual riches of the programs that EWTN has to offer?

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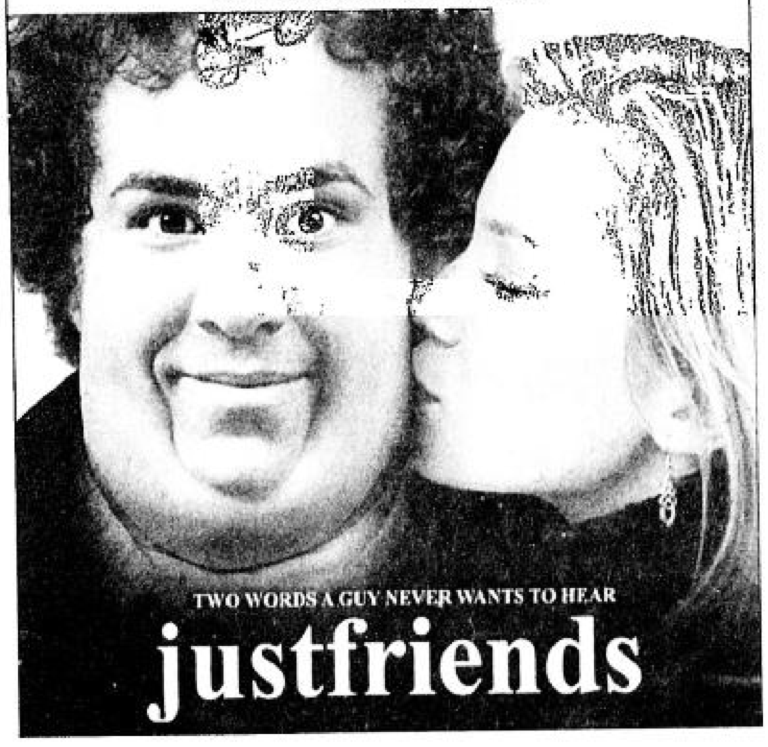

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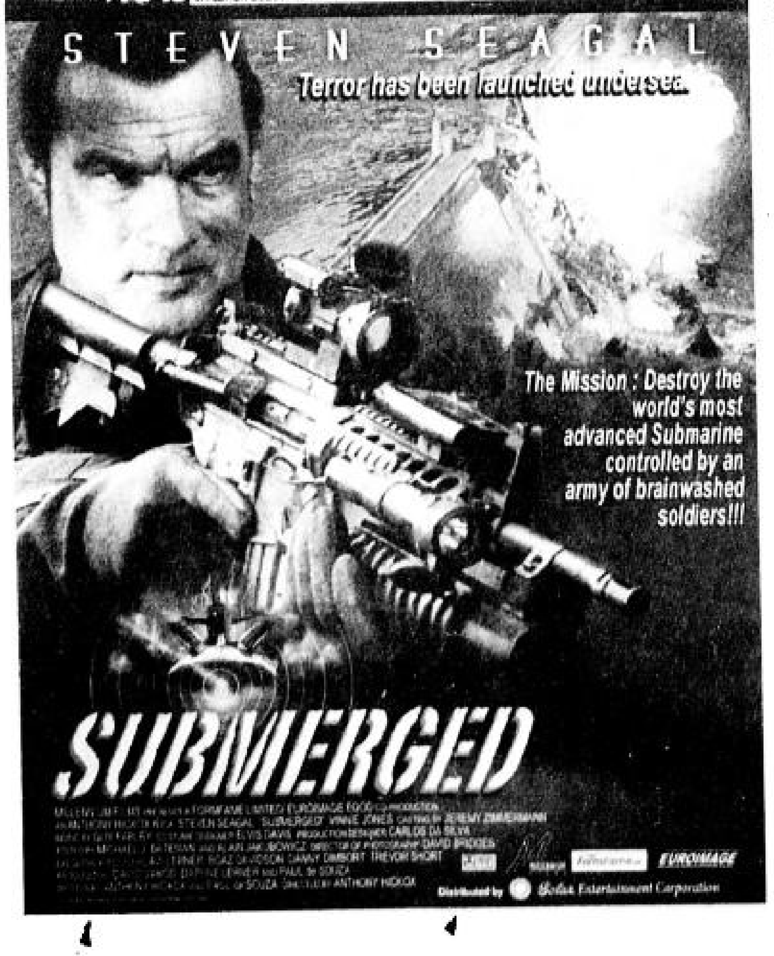

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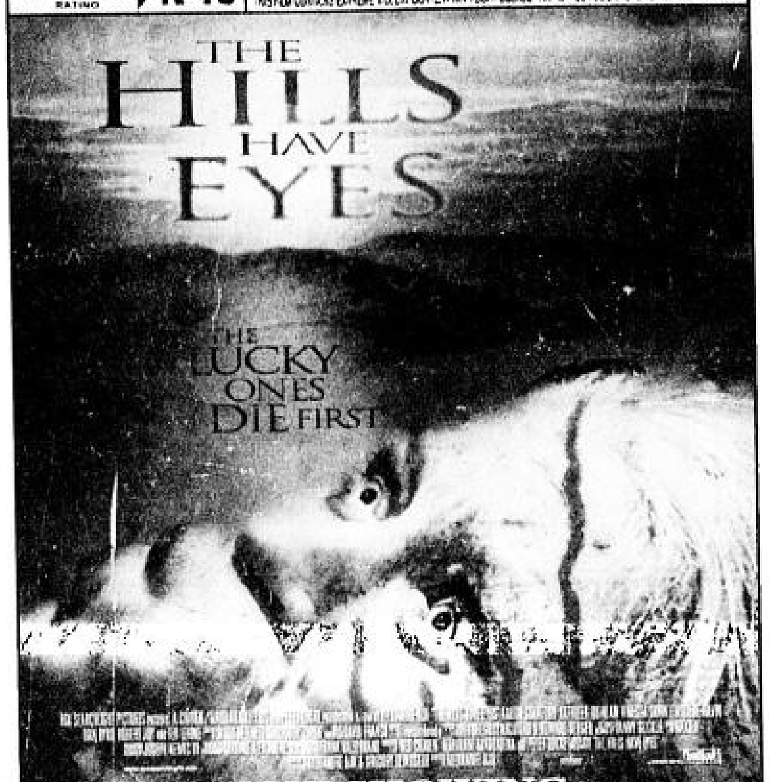

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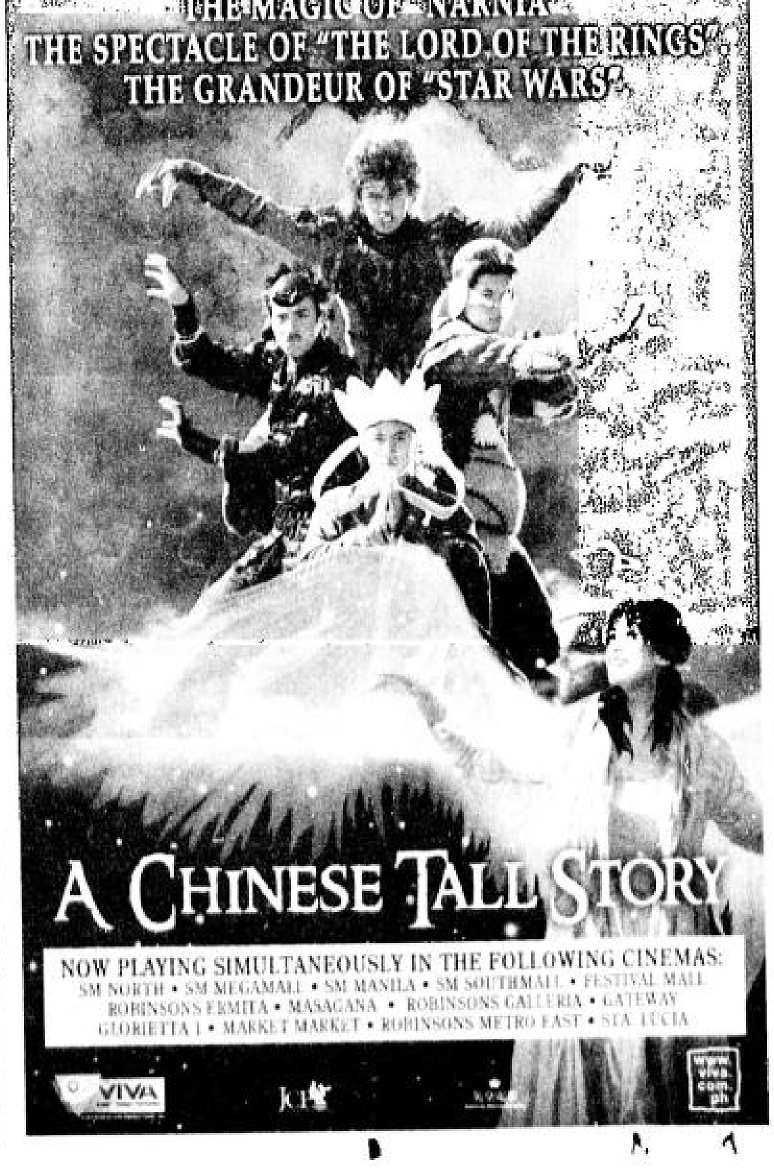

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Documentary tackles Beatles' contentious breakup

By Nestor U. Torre

THE BEATLES. Creative rivalry that turned into a destructive force.

EVEN YOUNGER MUSIC buffs are fans of the Beatles. Like their parents—and grandparents—they marvel at how the '60s group's memorable songs have remained fresh and vital to this day. Thus, they rue the group's demise, and wonder how and why it happened.

All sorts of theories have been advanced to answer this baffling question. Many versions focus on the "Yoko Ono factor," blaming the Japanese visual and performance artist for "poisoning" John Lennon's mind against the other Beatles.

Result

But, a recent TV documentary indicates that the group's breakup was the result of a more complex skein of factors:

From the very start of the Beatles' spectacular musical career, the relationship between John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr was characterized by a volatile but productive creative rivalry.

More specifically, John and Paul were engaged in a constant "friendly battle" to see who could come up with the best original songs.

Although John held the preeminent position in the group, Paul kept pushing him due to his exceptionally productive output when it came to coming up with original songs.

In the long run, this potential source of conflict benefited the group, because it pressured John to be similarly productive as a composer.

Fueled by the great new songs penned by John and Paul, the Beatles surged to the top of the pop and rock scene, exciting millions throughout the world with their songs' memorable tunes and lyrics.

Indeed, the Beatles' songs eventually defined their generation—and decades afterwards, continue to delight music lovers belonging to different generations.

So, why did the Beatles' amazing upward trajectory eventually self-destruct? Their creative rivalry turned into a destructive force when their manager, Brian Epstein, died.

Power vacuum

A power vacuum opened up, and John and Paul had different ideas for filling it. John wanted Alan Klein to step into Brian's shoes, but Paul pushed the group to hire his father-in-law. John won *that* battle, but it divided the group.

In addition, Brian's death pushed John into a deep depression that caused him to stop being the group's leader. Paul stepped into the breach to keep the group together, but George and Ringo periodically got ticked off with the new arrangement.

The next bone of contention was that infamous "Yoko Ono factor," which caused John to turn even more inward and to further distance himself from the group.

The rift became even more pronounced when Sir Lew Grade made an offer to purchase the Beatles' publishing empire. Reports have it that Paul secretly bought more shares in the group's holding company, and John was incensed when he found out about this underhanded move.

Official announcement

Paul then announced that he would no longer perform as a Beatle, and John got even angrier because it was his decision to break up the group, so he wanted to be the one to make the official announcement regarding this momentous move.

The case reached the courts, where all of the Beatles' "dirt" came out, further souring its members' interrelationships.

Then, in 1980, John was shot dead. This radically changed the situation because "it instantly turned John into an angel, and Paul into a devil."

The impression was created that Paul was "second-rate" compared to John—and Paul "had to fight with John's ghost for his rightful place."

These days, Paul has reasserted himself as an exceptional musical artist in his own right. As for the Beatles' legacy, the documentary concludes with the observation that both John and Paul have become musical icons whose songs have transcended the teapot tempests of the past. —Beatles forever!

SOTTO. Partial to romantic songs with touching lyrics.

Ciara Sotto waxes her mom's favorites

By Remy M. Umerez

AT FIRST SPIN, ONE WOULD THINK that "The Way of Love," Ciara Sotto's latest album, is nothing but a collection of revivals and old love songs. They include: "The Way of Love," "Aldila," "All I See is You," "Climb Every Mountain," "Moon River," "All the Things You Are," "You Don't Own Me" and "Where is Tomorrow?"

Special meaning

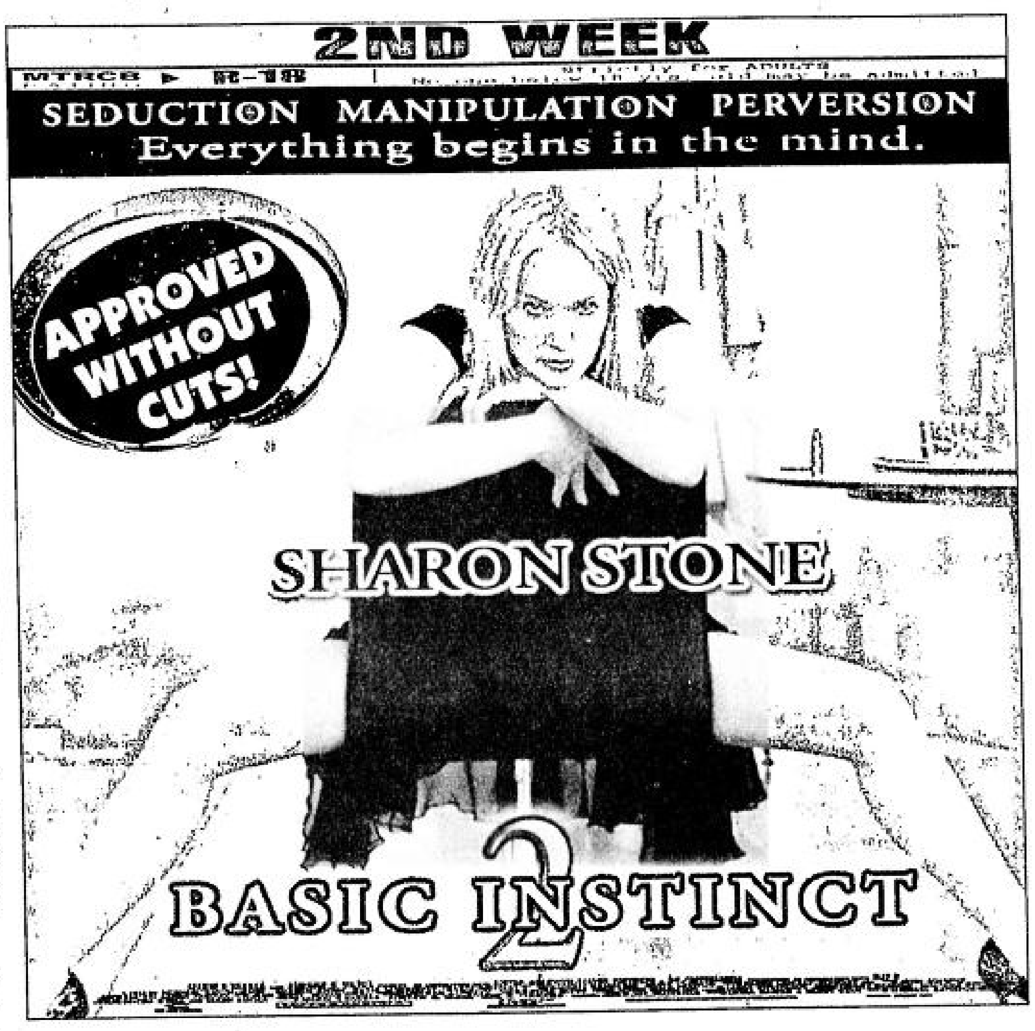
According to Ciara, however, these are special tunes because they were the songs her mom, Helen Gamboa, sang to her when she was a child. "I knew they were very special to her, because she hummed them all the time. Some of them have a very personal meaning to her. They are still her favorites," she says.

Ciara is partial to songs written in the '50s because of their romantic tone and touching lyrics. "Their melodies are simple and measured, unlike today's songs, *kung saan* anything goes *na lang*. I want to introduce these tunes to the younger generation, particularly the music of Henri Mancini."

She also hopes to record "Climb Every Mountain" with her mom soon.

Diva

Sotto takes singing very seriously. She is now on her sixth year at the UST Conservatory of Music. She wants to become a singing diva in the mold of Cecilia Bertoli, or the late Maria Callas!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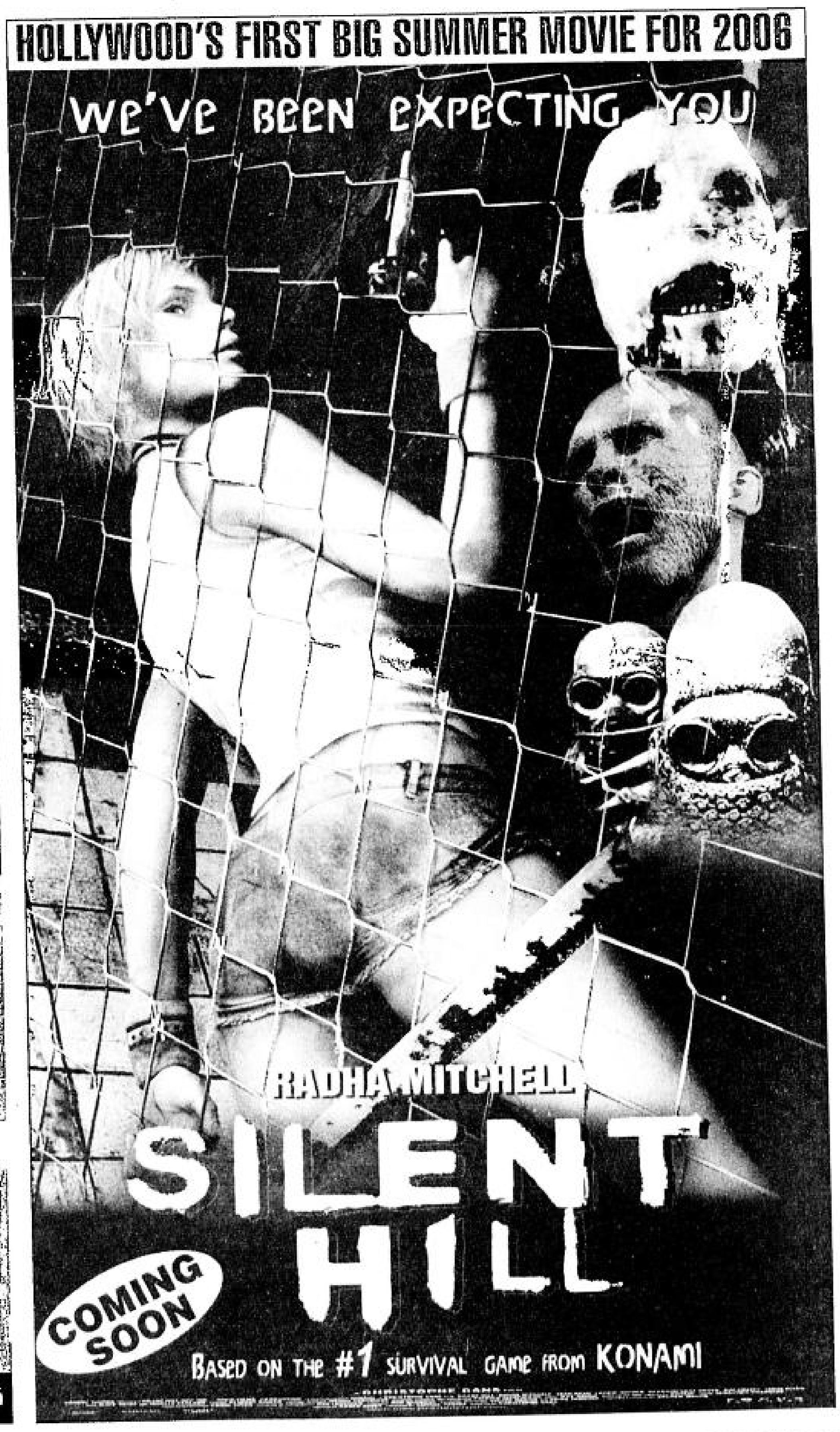
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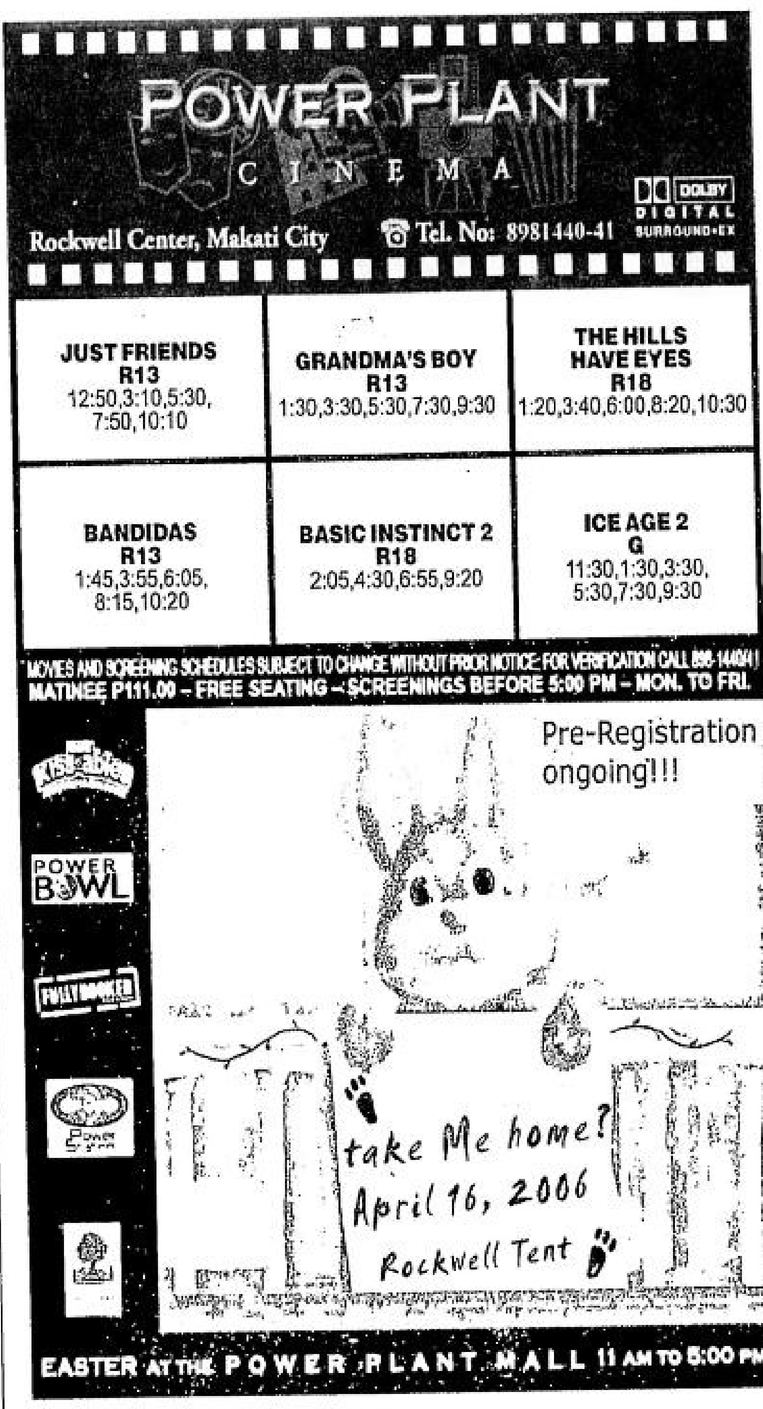
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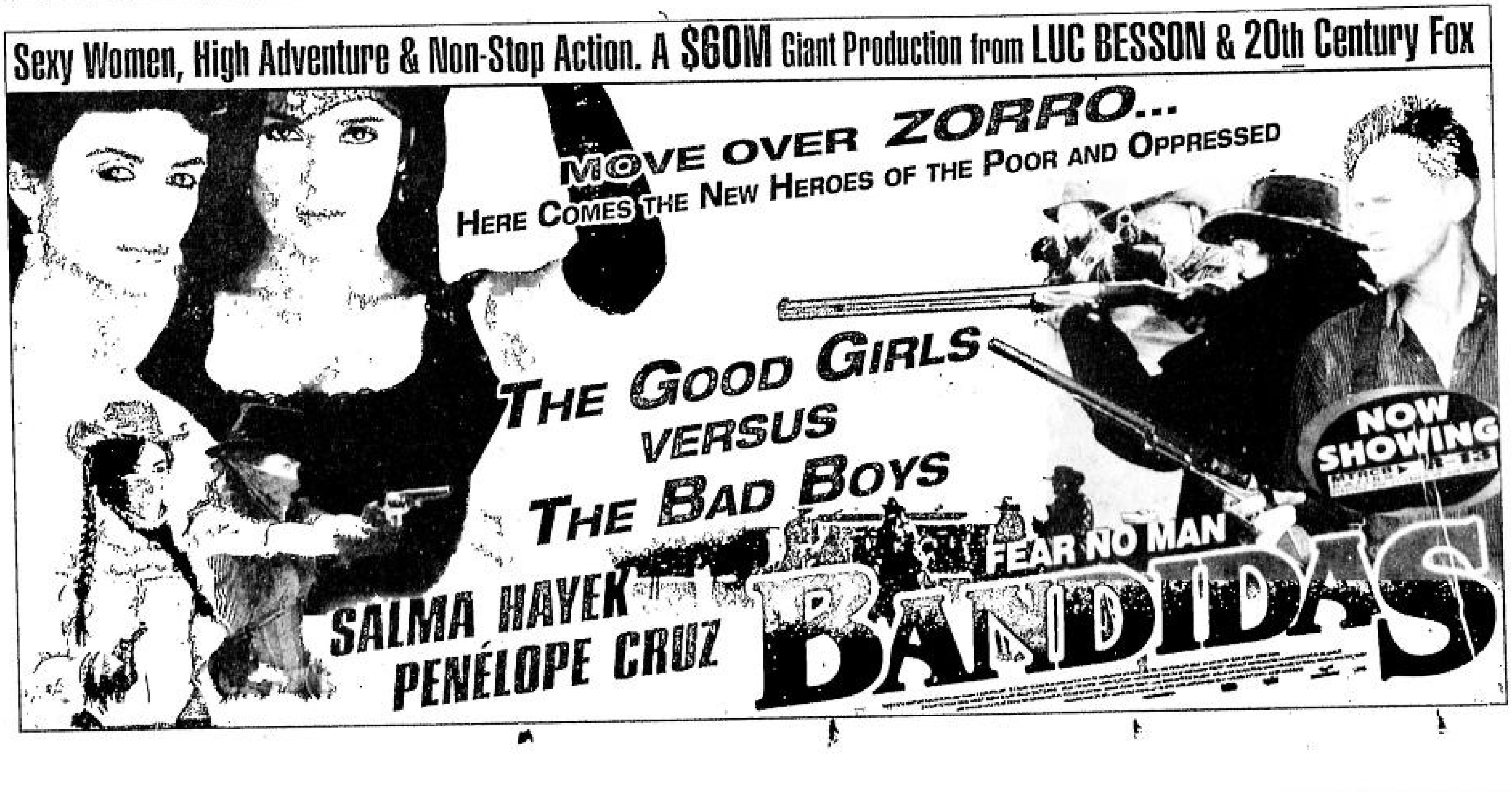
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Bob Marley	Stir it up	STIRITUP
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Bob Marley	No woman no cry	NOWOMAN
Bob Marley	Get up stand up	GETUP
Bob Marley	I shot the sheriff	SHERIFF
Bob Marley	Jamming	JAMMING
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Destiny's Child	Lose My Breath	LOSEMYBRTH
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Jennifer Lopez	Get Right	GETRIGHT
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Nelly	Grillz	GRILLZ
Outkast	Hey Ya	HEYA
Outkast	The Way You Move	WAYUMOVE
Rico J. Puno	Ang Huling El Bimbo	ELBIMBO
Rihanna	Pon De Replay	REPLAY
Snoop Dogg	Drop It like it's hot	DROPIT
Sponge Cola	Pare Ko	PAREKO
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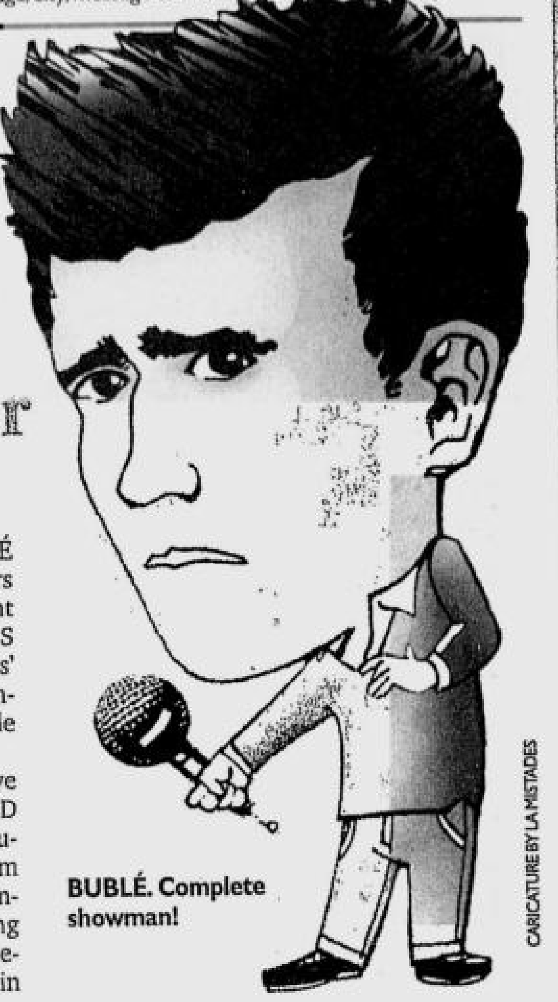
'Caught IN the Act' brims with vigor

By Noelani Torre


BUBLÉ. Complete showman!

CARICATURE BY LA MISTADES

IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHY MICHAEL BUBLÉ has become so popular after only a few years in the scene, listen to his live album, "Caught in the Act." Featuring portions from a PBS special and from his concert at Los Angeles' Wiltern Theater, the album will make you understand why Bublé has such a wide crossover appeal.

The guy's a complete showman. You'll have to watch the DVD to appreciate this—the CD contains only eight songs—as it is both a visual and aural experience. When you see him swagger down the stage in the opening number (Nina Simone's very appropriate "Feeling Good"), you'll see just how the twentysomething Candian has become so comfortable in his role as suave crooner.

Charismatic

Confident and charismatic, he charms the crowd almost effortlessly—and it's obvious most of them are eager to be charmed.

When you come to think of it, however, Bublé isn't really *that* unique. He's certainly not the first singer to get his material from jazz standards and the classics, and though his versions are good, they're not particularly brilliant.

Where he excels is in putting up a good show. Not only does he have the talent for invoking the ghost of Frank Sinatra, he's also adept at the difficult art of crowd-pleasing. And indeed, you'd be hard-pressed to find a more pleased crowd than the one caught on video in "Caught in the Act."

Sincere

Neatly gliding from smooth vocals to equally smooth patter, he holds the audience in the palm of his hand! Some might find his rhapsodizing over his love for being able to "continue the legacy" to be put-on, but he—and this is one of his gifts—appears to be completely sincere.

The show is livened up even more by the presence of several guest performers—Italian diva Laura Pausini sings "You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine" with Bublé; popular trumpeter, Chris Botti, makes an appearance in "Song for You," and Josh Groban pops in for a comic number.

The flavor of the collection is that of youth, energy, and good, clean fun. The arrangements have been injected with a good deal of energy—take a particularly fizzy reworking of "Summer Wind" on the audio disc, for example.

The playlist will be familiar to Bublé's fans, ranging from golden ditties like "I've Got You Under My Skin" and "Save the Last Dance for Me" to unexpected covers like the Beatles' "Can't Buy Me Love," Van Morrison's "Moondance," and Freddie Mercury's "Crazy Little Thing Called Love."

Quiet ballad

One of the most outstanding tracks is an original, however—"Home," which he co-wrote with Amy Foster-Gilles and Alan Chang, is a quiet ballad that resonates with feeling.

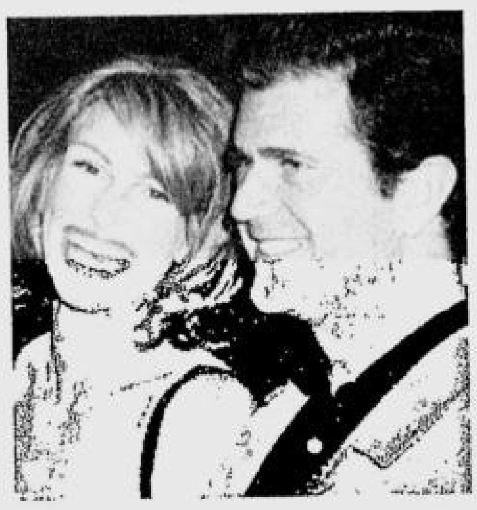
Finally, Bublé has a voice you can cuddle up with,. but it's not enough in itself to blow you away. The excellent big band takes care of that. First-rate and brimming with vigor, they catapult the singer from being merely good to exceptional!

Mel, Julia face new thespic challenges

By Rito P. Asilo

SHOW BIZ Q & A

Rito P. Asilo


ROBERTS AND GIBSON. No rest for the talented!

FROM MARCIA ZOBRADO: **"Where is Mel Gibson? I hope he doesn't stay behind the cameras too long. What projects are lined up too Meg Ryan, Antonio Banderas and Julia Roberts?"**

The multi-million-dollar success of 2004's "The Passion of the Christ" has inspired Mel Gibson to direct another non-English language feature, "Apocalypto" (set 600 years ago), about a young man who escapes from being sacrificed to the gods in the ancient Mayan kingdom. Watch out for Gibson's surprise cameo in the film's trailer.

TV series

Not content with his success on the big screen, Mel also directed some episodes of the family comedy TV series, "Complete Savages," shown locally on ETC. He will be seen next in Richard Donner's "Sam and George," about two friends who are reunited after one of them (Gibson) is released from jail—20 years after he's wrongfully convicted!

For her part, Julia Roberts is busy playing to SRO audiences in the Broadway hit, "Three Days of Rain," which scored an astounding $7-million in advance ticket sales—in one day alone! In fact, she is winning critical praise—even when she breaks out of character!

Julia was so popular with New York's theatergoers that, on opening night, her first few lines were inaudible over the audience's thunderous applause!

The New York Daily News reported, "Midway through the second act, Roberts had to contend with a runaway prop tomato: A plastic veggie landed on the floor, bounced and echoed like a table tennis ball—a blooper that left the actress briefly in stitches. She broke character and couldn't help flashing her trademark toothy grin."

Rebels

Roberts' latest screen project is another Mike Nichols ("Closer") film, "Charlie Wilson's War," about a Texas congressman (played by Tom Hanks) who assisted Afghan rebels in their war against Russia.

On the other hand, after experimenting with Jane Campion's art-house flick, "In the Cut," where she shed her "American Sweetheart" image (along with her clothes), Meg Ryan appeared in the disappointing 2004 boxing drama, "Against the Ropes."

Both films were artistic experiments that fared poorly at the tills. To regain lost ground, Ryan is currently writing a script for a film tentatively titled "Somewhere in Time," a romantic drama that teams her anew with her "Sleepless in Seattle" co-star, Tom Hanks.

Meg has just finished filming Jon Kasdan's "In the Land of Women," about a heartbroken TV writer (Adam Brody of "The O.C.") who relocates to Detroit to take care of his grandmother. Along the way, he touches the lives of women, one of them played by Ryan, who live across the street.

Professional dancer

Like Mel, Julia and Meg, Antonio Banderas is no stranger to challenging film roles. He will be seen next in Liz Friedlander's "Take the Lead," about a former professional dancer (Banderas) who volunteers to teach dance in a public school in New York. The production also features Filam actor Dante Basco ("The Debut").

Banderas' other projects: "Shrek 3"; "Bordertown," a crime drama with Jennifer Lopez, and "Puss-in-Boots," the anticipated movie spin-off of his popular "Shrek 2" character.

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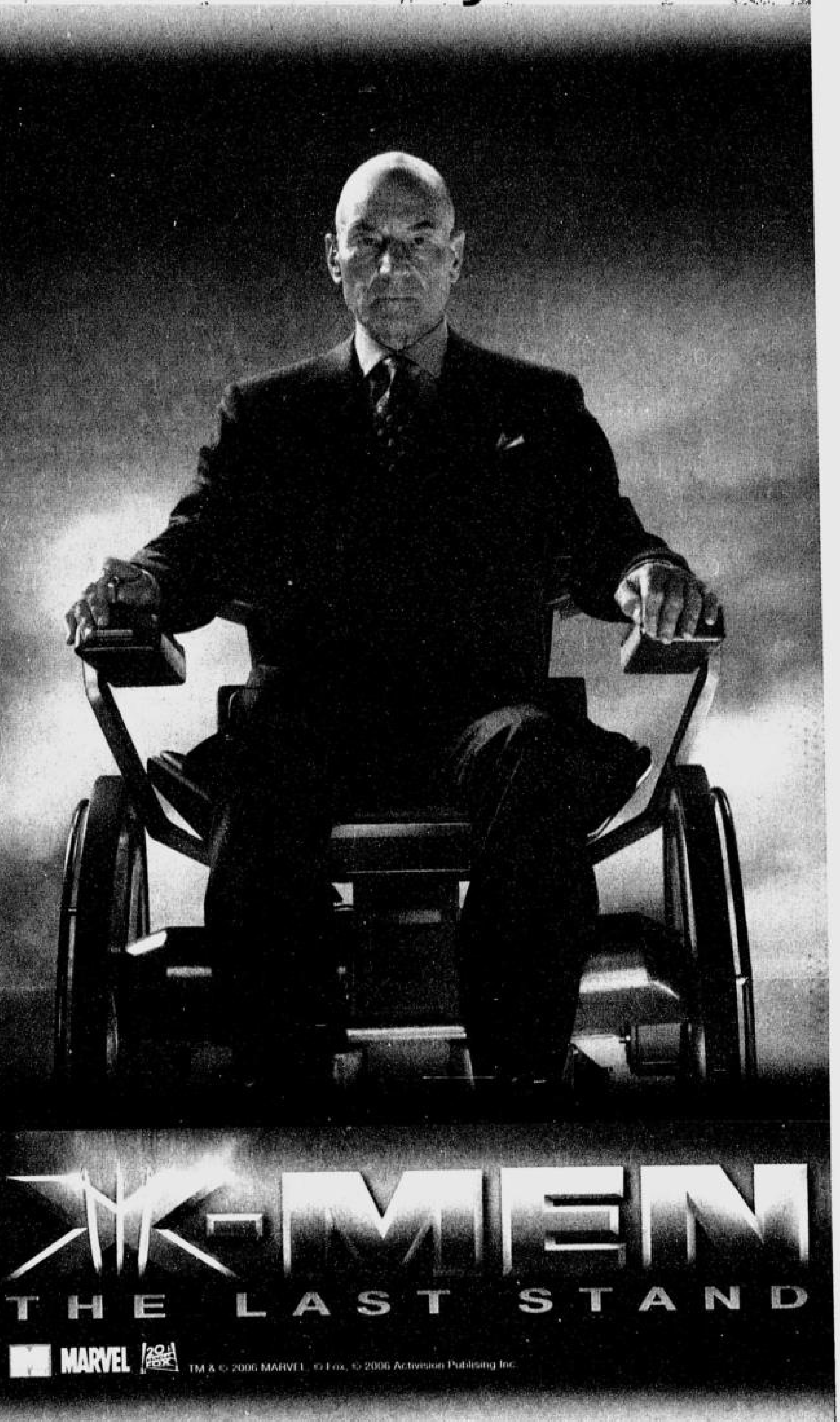

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LAKAS NG SUMMER SAMAHAN!

Chills and thrills at the movies

By Nestor U. Torre

WHY DO MOVIEGOERS PAY good money to watch a film that will scare them out of their wits? Because there's a cathartic point to all those thrills and chills, and the resulting relief and release from fear and tension are worth their weight in—popcorn!.

For instance, the new suspense thriller, "When A Stranger Calls," engages the addled empathy of teen viewers, because it shows what happens when a 16-year-old babysitter has to save herself and the children placed in her care from an evil interloper.

LUCAS. Leads cast of Wolfgang Petersen's adventure film.

Fierce fighter

In the process, she goes from happy-go-lucky teen to traumatized but fierce fighter. The young protagonist is played by Camilla Belle.

From Wolfgang Petersen comes the thrilling action adventure, "Poseidon," starring Kurt Russell, Josh Lucas and Richard Dreyfuss.

It's New Year's Eve and festivities have begun aboard the luxury cruise ship Poseidon. But, on the bridge, the chief officer senses that something is wrong. Scanning the horizon, he sees it—a rogue wave, a monstrous wall of water over 100 feet high, bearing down on the ship with tremendous speed.

The wave strikes with colossal force, rolling the ship completely upside down! In the assault's aftermath, a few hundred survivors are left in the still intact Main Ballroom. What can they do to escape and survive?

Friendship

In "Eight Below" chills of a more literal sort come to the fore, with the film's exciting tale about loyalty and the bonds of friendship set in the extreme wilderness of Antarctica.

In the film, three members of a scientific expedition are forced to leave their team of beloved sled dogs behind due to a sudden accident and perilous weather condition.

During the harsh Arctic winter, the dogs must struggle for survival in the frozen wilderness for six long months, until the adventurers can mount a rescue mission. Frank Marshall directs a cast led by Paul Walker, Bruce Greenwood and Jason Biggs.

Finally, Emma Roberts and Jojo Levesque play best friends in the fish-out-of-water fantasy, "Aquamarine."

Mermaid

In the movie, their characters chance upon a mermaid named Aquamarine in a swimming pool after a violent storm has washed her up from the sea nearby.

When Aqua sets her sights on a lifeguard and asks the two girls for help to win his heart, they refuse.

But, when Aqua promises to grant them anything they wish for, the girls agree with alacrity—because, unless something magical happens, one of them has to move away, and life will never be the same again for the two best friends!

Summer thoughts

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

SOME PEOPLE SEE SUMMER as a time to just cruise and let the days pass in idleness. But, time is precious, and summer vacations should be spent to achieve progress and personal development.

Wise men know how quickly time flies, so they utilize every moment to achieve their goals in life: Self-realization and inner happiness.

Here are things to think about this summer:

Connection

We can take a vacation anytime by establishing a loving connection with our Supreme Father through meditation and prayer as a respite from the miseries of the material world. We should place our lives in His hands.

A real vacation means taking time out from our roles as director, manager and protector. Instead, we accept being directed and protected by the Supreme Lord.

At summertime, we find soothing pleasure in the cool waters of a pool or the ocean. This is equivalent to finding happiness in spiritual activities.

Vacation means living life and having fun. We can have these in the spiritual dimension, and they don't require money. All it takes is submission and surrender to the Supreme Enjoyer.

The best vacation spot is not *that* far. In your heart rests the Supreme Beloved, who is the source of all beautiful and restful places. He is the ultimate refuge of the weary soul!

'Mr. & Ms.' celebrates 30th year

THIS MONTH, "MR. & MS," magazine celebrates its 30th anniversary with popular stars, Dennis Trillo and Angel Locsin, on the cover.

Other interesting articles: "Pearl of the Orient." "Divination: The A-Z of Predicting Your Life." "Spirituality and the Filipino People." "Luck in Your Own Garden." "Manny Pacquiao: Pinoy Idol." "Of Miracles, Magic and the Paranormal." "Spiritual Emergencies at Mid-Life."

"Fantasy Comes to TV Life." "The Filipino Techie." "A Triumph of the Filipino Spirit." "Man or Elementals: Who is Higher in Evolution?" "Text Me!" "Wrestling Mania."

"Family Ties." "Deep Nerve Therapy." "Reflex Your Way to Health and Beauty." "Bora Boracay." "The Hopeful Pinoy." And "Portraits of Outstanding Filipinas."

MONTAGE

'Eight Below'

Sneak previews of the new film, "Eight Below," will be held on April 10 and 11 at selected theaters. Inspired by a true story, "Eight Below" tells the exciting and inspiring tale of the courage and friendship that enable four adventurers and their beloved sled dogs to cope with the extreme dangers of Antarctica.

'Shopping Spree' promo

Colgate Fresh Confidence with Cooling Crystals recently launched its "P1-M Makeover Shopping Spree" promo with a glittering show at the Glorietta Activity Center in Makati City, featuring Jay-R, Shaina Magdayao and VJ Mariel Rodriguez.

The promo gives 10 lucky winners P100,000 each to shop at Makati malls on May 13.

To join, write your name, address, contact number and signature on a carton of Colgate Fresh Confidence's Spicy Fresh or Peppermint Ice variants, and drop your entry at LBC Branches nationwide. Deadline is April 17.

On April 21, two winners each will be selected from Metro Manila, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

'Harry Potter' on video

Retailers in the States report record-breaking first-day sales of five million units of "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" on DVD. In the Philippines, the film's fully-loaded two-disc DVD is also doing well. It includes conversations with the cast, interactive challenges, making-of featurettes and never-before-seen footage.

'Go, Diego, Go!

Starting April 14 on the Nickelodeon Channel, say "Hola!" to Diego, the bilingual animal rescuer and nature expert who talks to animals in the new show, "Go, Diego, Go!" Each episode introduces preschoolers to scientific and investigative thinking.

Also telecast on April 14 is "Danny Phantom Special—The Ultimate Enemy."

"THE GOBLET OF FIRE." Two-disc DVD includes never-before-seen footage.

Kamikazee

The Kamikazee band stages a free show at SM Bacoor at 5 p.m. today. Autograph-signing follows the showcase.

Secret Bible Week

For its initial episode, the National Geographic Channel's Secret Bible Week will preniere "The Gospel of Judas" at 10 p.m. on April 9. The two-hour special tells the incredible story of what has happened to the document since it was found, recent authentication process and analysis, and key insights from its translation and interpretation.

Bond films on Star Movies

At 9 p.m. today, the Star Movies Channel screens the James Bond films, "Octopussy" and "On Her Majesty's Secret Service," back-to-back.

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7 JUST FRIENDS

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Ayala MUSEUM — Registration is now ongoing for Ayala Museum's Summer Art Festival Workshop 2006. For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

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Senior stars live it up

By Nestor U. Torre

STREISAND. Has acknowledged some sultry secrets in her sexy closet.

IF 40 *IS* THE NEW 30, THAT'S LIKE GIVING show biz's senior stars a new lease on life—and they're taking full advantage of that "extra" decade by initiating projects that were deemed improbable only a few years ago!

Take Barbra Streisand. Only some seasons ago, she bade farewell to live performance, preferring to leave her fans with enduring memories of her singing talent at its prime.

Tour

Well, don't look now, but Barbra's back with another performing tour (her last-last?). Seems like she feels 50, not 60, so let the good times roll—again!

To whip up excitement over her latest performing gambit, Barbra has acknowledged some sultry secrets in her sexy closet. For one thing, she's revealed romantic liaisons with the mucho macho likes of Don Johnson.

Yes, despite the fact that some people thought she was "ugly" when she was young, Barbara later succeeded in "thinking" herself beautiful—lovely enough to be desired by some of Tinseltown's most desirable male stars.

That, plus her drop-dead talent, has made her a turn-on even for men who can have their pick of the world's most beautiful women.

Roving eyes

These days, however, Barbra's roving eyes have rested on her "for life" beau, James Brolin, and her personal dating service is permanently closed.

For her part, Sharon Stone is 48 years old, but that's only 38 in the "new chronology," so watch her sizzle! Her latest showcase is the sequel to "Basic Instinct," which ups the ante for screen eroticism so much that some more conservative viewers are howling mad.

But, Sharon knows what she wants, and what's best for her, at this mature stage of her smoking life, so sticks and stones may break her bones, but words will never dissuade her from daring and baring!

Enduring beauty

Aside from her enduring beauty and sexiness, what Sharon has going for her is her intelligence. The combination of brains and sexiness is a heady mix for many people, so the "neo-thirtysomething" star is experiencing a Second Spring in her professional and personal life.

Finally, Joan Collins is facing the TV cameras anew for a CBS special on the reunion of the stars of the hit soap opera, "Dynasty." Looking none the worse for wear (and tear), Collins is serving notice that she's *still* the quintessential TV villainess for all sinister reasons and seasons.

She does admit that physical violence has become more tiring (not to mention tiresome) for her to execute, so she's opting for less extreme physicality, this time around.

The spirit may still be willing, but being so archly wicked all the time *can* be a strain on those famous eyebrows!

Stellar shapes and curves through the years

By Behn Cervantes

HEPBURN. Was dressed by the world's most important couturiers.

I WAS INTRODUCED to stellar curves in the persons of Betty Grable and Rita Hayworth. Betty was known for her million-dollar legs. Her gams were so beautiful that Lloyd's of London insured her shapely legs for a million megabucks. And remember, this was in the '40s!

Sight to behold

Rita's shape in a flimsy negligee was a sight to behold. Another famous pair of legs belonged to Marlene Dietrich, the German sex bomb who immortalized "Lili Marlene," a song so poignant it caused many German soldiers to wonder why they were involved in a senseless world war! The song was considered seditious to the Nazi cause by Adolf Hitler, no less.

Hollywood physiognomy was the silhouette of the pretty and curvaceous chorines who were staple fare in movie musicals. They were uniformly tall, shapely and blonde—the idealized version of the girl-next-door.

Jane Russell was so buxom that Howard Hughes, who discovered her, instructed his engineering staff to construct the proper brassiere for the actress' ample boobs!

Notion

Hollywood's notion of the sexy shape has changed through the decades.

By the '50s, the "ideal" Hollywood shape became even more pronounced as Marilyn Monroe and her whistle-bait ilk made the slopes between bosom, waist and hips even more accented. By then, the sex bombs were 36-22-36, as epitomized by the likes of Monroe, Janet Leigh, Ava Gardner and Elizabeth Taylor.

Mitzi Gaynor, Jan Sterling and Gina Lollobrigida were sexy dolls whose shapes dominated the colorful Cinemascope screens.

Sophia Loren was a modern Aphrodite in the flesh!

Then, Grace Kelly and Audrey Hepburn came and conquered Hollywood. The stylish duo provided the movie screen with an entirely different silhouette. By Tinseltown's standards, they were skinny and flat-chested. However, they were distinctively beautiful—and were dressed by the world's most important couturiers.

Appreciation

When and how does the world's appreciation for shape change?

Hollywood and the MTV generation now glorifiy the androgynous shapes of Madonna, Janet Jackson and their muscled lot. The bosoms are not as ample, the waists are flat but rather wide, the hips are almost gone, and they are proud to show off their abs.

Current Hollywood A-listers Julia Roberts and Charlize Theron are good actresses with great charisma, but they don't have the Hollywood shape of yesteryears. No wonder, sexy Angelina Jolie captures the imagination of the world. She has singularly brought back the '50s silhouette—although she also sports some tattoos. Neither Monroe, Gardner nor Taylor would have allowed a tattoo to mar their perfectly-maintained bodies. Yes, times, tastes and shapes have changed, indeed!

Roselle Nava is out to regain lost ground

By Jocelyn Valle

NAVA. Preparing to record her seventh album

IN 2001, ROSELLE NAVA had to take time off from a thriving career as a recording star, TV host and movie actress to recuperate from a throat that had been damaged by improper use.

Roselle got a vocal coach to teach her new techniques. She also observed a healthier diet. Soon, she was back in fighting form, but by then, the performing field had become crowded with singing champions who enjoyed the backing of media giants.

Opportunity

Feeling discouraged but refusing to give up, the "Ang TV" alumna grabbed at whatever opportunity came her way, and challenged herself to perform better each time. For an extra boost of confidence, she began going to the gym and, to remind everyone that she's all grown up, she joined the cast of the stage production, "Penis Talks."

"Yes," she admits, "the stint helped me shed my inhibitions onstage." Indeed, in her birthday concert at Bagaberde last month, Roselle's opening salvo (of Miami Sound Machine hits) had her wearing an outfit that showed off her fab abs. She also displayed her terpsichorean skills in a medley of dance tunes by the likes of Beyoncé and Jennifer Lopez.

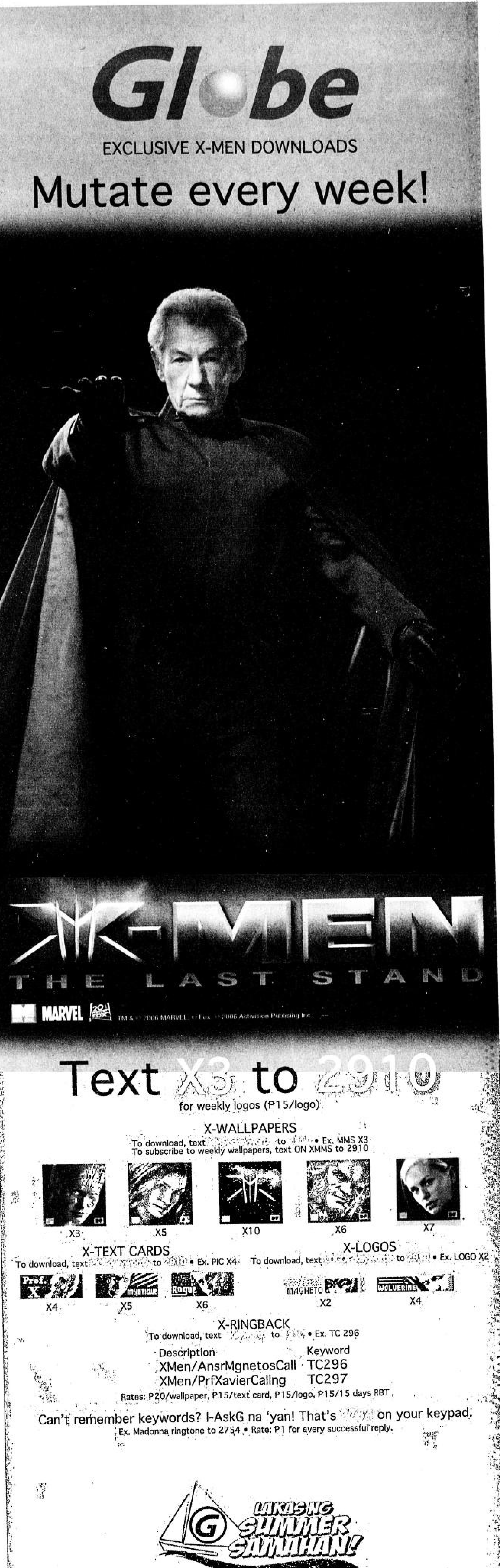
"I guess I've matured," she smiles. Though she has a marketing management degree from De La Salle, Roselle has never worked in an office. She shares, "My heart is really into music. I enjoy sharing my talent more now."

She recently wrapped up a bar tour for Sketchers, and is about to start another one with Jinky Vidal.

Most applauded

"I'm also collecting materials for my seventh album," she relates. "But, I'll stick to singing pop music. The most applauded numbers in my gigs are my hits, 'Dahil Mahal na Mahal' and 'You,' so I've realized that I'm most effective in this type of songs. And I like it that way."

"I hope that I still have a place in show business," she beams. "It's difficult to regain lost ground, but I'm having fun proving that I can do it!"



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P.O.D. returns with vibrant blend of rock, hip-hop and reggae

P.O.D. The boys love Jesus—and aren't shy singing about it!

By Noelani Torre

HERE'S A GIVE-AWAY trivia question: How many rap-metal bands love Jesus and aren't shy singing and rapping about it?

There's only one right answer, because there's only one band like that out there—the hard-rocking foursome from San Diego who call themselves P.O.D.

They may have tattoos, dreadlocks, baggy jeans, and a name that spells out as Payable on Death, but they're the only ones in their genre tackling themes that your usual I-had-a-bad-childhood-so-it's-not-my-fault-I'm-like-this rap metalist wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole.

Relief

Plus, raucous though they sound, they're clean-mouthed. No dirty, women-degrading expletives from this crew—and you don't know how big a relief that is for female listeners (yes, they exist).

In fact, P.O.D.'s latest release, "Testify," is practically the only CD on display in the rock section that doesn't have a "Parental Advisory Explicit Content" tag.

Lest you be misled by all of this, however, these guys are not a bunch of preachy goodie-goodies. They *don't* force their faith down their listeners' throats, and you may not even notice the Biblical allusions if you weren't primed for them.

"TESTIFY." Raucous but clean-mouthed.

With their not-so-ordinary blending of rock, hip-hop and reggae, P.O.D.—Traa, Sonny, Wuv, and Jason Truby—first caught the public's attention with their major label debut, "The Fundamental Elements of Southtown," in '99.

The album went platinum, and the band followed up on that success with contributions to the soundtracks of films like "Any Given Sunday," "Little Nicky," and "Ready to Rumble."

Momentum

Their 2001 album, "Satellite," was also a success, though their momentum slowed down somewhat when original guitarist Marcos decided to quit. After replacing him with Truby, they released "Payable on Death" in 2003.

"Testify" features the same lineup, with the famed Glen Ballard (Alanis Morissette, Dave Matthews Band) helming the production. With a 50-minute playtime, the CD has 13 songs, some of which feature guest artists Matisyahu and Boo Yaa T.R.I.B.E.

The album opens with the vibrant, reggae-flavored "Roots in Stereo," featuring the very talented Hasidic MC Matisyahu. A rocking and unexpectedly funky number with a big chorus, it's an effective opener and the harbinger of more good things to come.

Innovation

Unfortunately, despite the presence of other solid numbers like "Lights Out," "Sounds Like War," and "On the Grind," the rest of the songs seem to blend into one another. They have a tendency to sound alike—and if you're a rap-metal band and this is your fifth album, a little more innovation is always a good thing.

Rap-metal's youthful audience is also maturing, and looking for more in their music. Listening to "Testify," you get the feeling that P.O.D. hasn't quite kept up yet with their audience. Some of their songs' lyrics remain on the adolescent level, as well.

Still, there are glimpses of a brighter future in this album. Let's hope they follow through!

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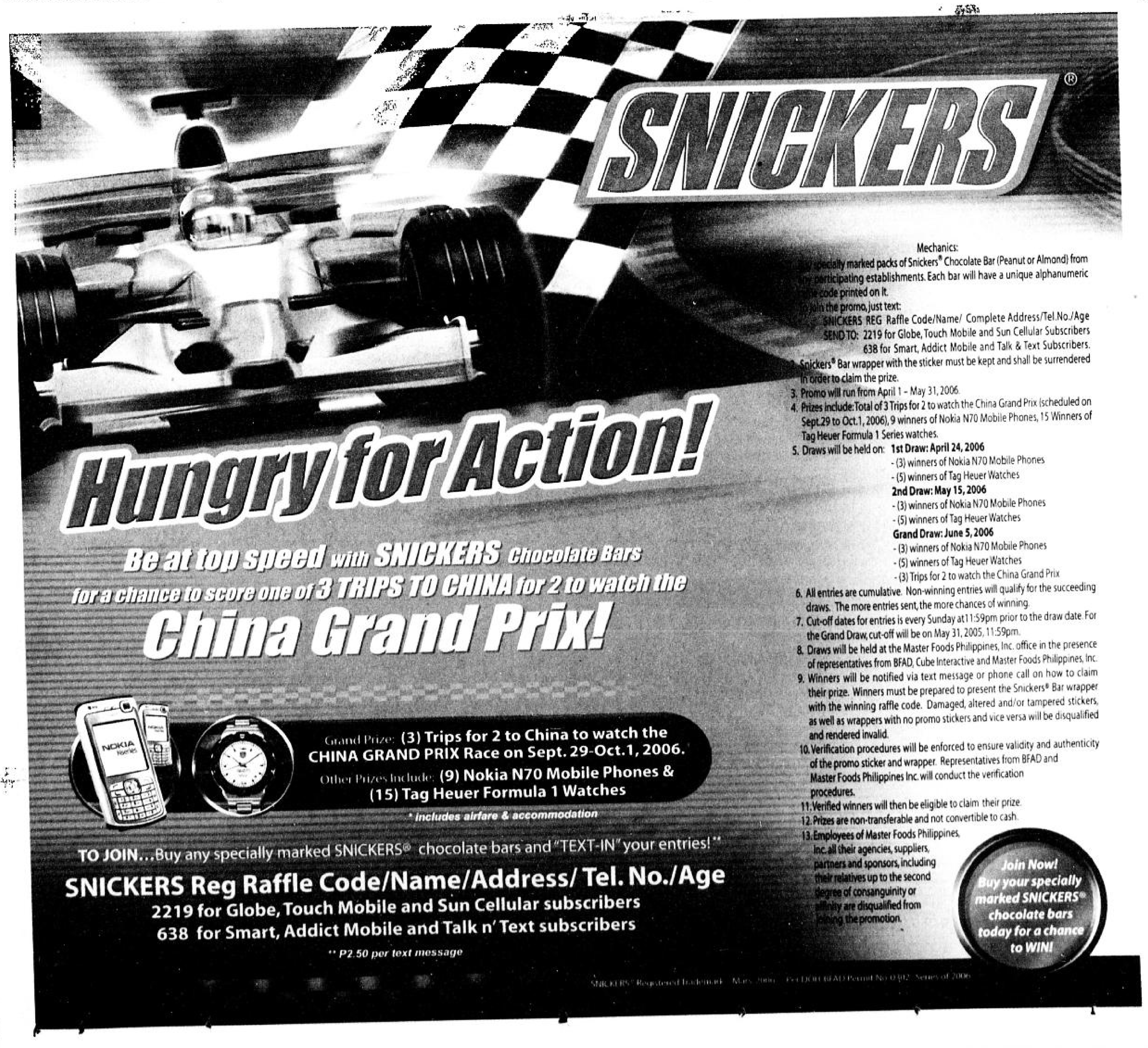

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4 CHINESE TALL STORY
12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00

5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
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6 GRANDMA'S BOY
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7 MOMENTS OF LOVE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10.00

8 JUST FRIENDS
1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00

9 SHE'S THE MAN
12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00

10 BASIC INSTINCT 2
12.20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

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1 ICE AGE 2
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2 CHINESE TALL STORY
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 JUST FRIENDS 12:00 1:40 3:20
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4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
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5 BANDIDAS
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6 GRANDMA'S BOY
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

7 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
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3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9.05

4 GRANDMA'S BOY
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

5 CHINESE TALL STORY
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6 BASIC INSTINCT 2
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7 BANDIDAS
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

8 MOMENTS OF LOVE
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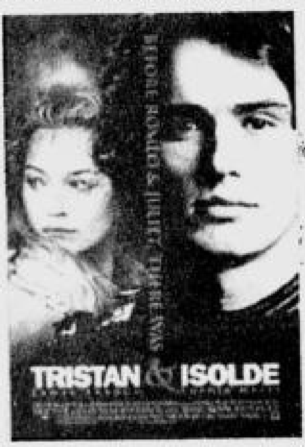

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06:55 / 8:30LFS
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JUST FRIENDS
SHE'S THE MAN
VENOM
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2 JUST FRIENDS
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 BANDIDAS
5 CHINESE TALL STORY
6 GRANDMA'S BOY
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8 VENOM

SM CITY DASMARINAS
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2 HOUSE OF FURY
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
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VENOM
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ULTRAVIOLET
SHE'S THE MAN
V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 JUST FRIENDS
4 BANDIDAS

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 ICE AGE 2
2 BANDIDAS
3 VENOM
4 GRANDMA'S BOY
5 JUST FRIENDS
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY MANILA
1 GRANDMA'S BOY
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 ICE AGE 2
5 NANNY McPHEE
6 BANDIDAS
7 CHINESE TALL STORY
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 V FOR VENDETTA
11 VENOM
12 JUST FRIENDS

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 ICE AGE 2
2 BANDIDAS
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 VENOM
5 GRANDMA'S BOY
6 JUST FRIENDS
7 CHINESE TALL STORY
8 SHE'S THE MAN
9 ULTRAVIOLET

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3 SHE'S THE MAN
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2 ICE AGE 2
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4 BANDIDAS

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2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY MARILAO
1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ICE AGE 2
4 VENOM

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ICE AGE 2
4 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY BACOOR
1 NANNY McPHEE
2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 ICE AGE 2
4 ULTRAVIOLET
5 BANDIDAS
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE
7 VENOM
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3

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1 SHAGGY DOG
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2

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1 ICE AGE 2
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 NANNY McPHEE
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY LUCENA
1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 ICE AGE 2
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY MOLINO
1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 VENOM

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 MARANATHA
2 ULTRAVIOLET
10:50FS / 11:00 MF / 12:45
2:30 / 04:15 / 06:00
07:45 / 09:15 LFS
09:30 LMF / 11:00 END
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
10:50FS / 11:00 MF
01:06 / 03:12 / 05:18
07:24 / 09:05 LFS
09:30 LMF / 11:10 END
4 ICE AGE 2
5 NANNY McPHEE
6 V FOR VENDETTA
7 MOMENTS OF LOVE
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3

SM CITY ILOILO
1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 RESERVED
3 ICE AGE 2
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 VENOM
7 RESERVED
8 THE DARK

SM CITY DAVAO
1 CASANOVA
2 NANNY McPHEE
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 THE DARK
5 SYRIANA
6 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY CAGAYAN
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2 SHAGGY DOG
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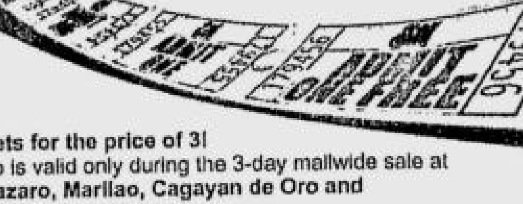

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Winning 'Moments'

By Ramon E. Bayron

"MAMAY, MALI PO ang hula nila!" This quote from the legendary Superstar, Nora Aunor, could best be applied to GMA Films' "surprise" hit movie, "Moments of Love," currently in extended showing in theaters nationwide.

Grossing more than most industry players expected, the film has succeeded in challenging the veracity of a number of "cardinal rules for commercial filmmaking."

Tenets

The otherwise unassailable "tenets" are: 1) Love stories are only for popular stars paired as "love teams." 2) The two leads should always end up together at the end of the movie. 3) Never bring in the element of "history" as it turns off the *masa*. And 4) If you have a "weak" film, do not bother spending for promotions.

Despite being reminded by well-meaning colleagues in the industry of those "rules," GMA Films did exactly the opposite by casting a "non-love team" tandem (Dingdong and Iza) whose individual box-office powers have yet to be proven at the tills, in a love story that dares to take a less predictable plotline, and utilizing the '50s milieu. Then, GMA Films conducted a no-nonsense, trailblazing promotional campaign.

For its "bravery" and "stubbornness," GMA Films is being rewarded by the "unpredictable and hard-to-please" *masa*, who trooped to the theaters in droves.

Harvest

Hopefully, this harvest of benefits will prompt other major players to rediscover their own "passion" for innovative filmmaking.

Aside from the company, Dingdong Dantes has benefited from the movie's success. As predicted, Dingdong is now the new favorite for male lead roles, with offers coming from at least two other major players in the industry. Hopefully, he will be careful in choosing the perfect follow-up to his role in "Moments."

Iza Calzado has also elicited interest from the likes of Robin Padilla and the Unitel group. It would not be a surprise to hear about a new Mark Reyes film in the coming months. And there's the screenwriters' group whose otherwise "uncommercial" materials may be given a second look by producers who want to duplicate GMA Films' success.

Placing the 'star system' in the proper context

By Nestor U. Torre

OUR RECENT PIECE on the decline of the star system has elicited reactions from a number of film buffs.

While some of them agree that stars became too powerful and upstaged other key members of the production team, others felt that "star value" should remain an important part of the moviegoing experience.

Viewers

It is recalled that, when movies were first shot and screened, the actors were unidentified. After only a few films, however, viewers started asking who they were, and their names were belatedly revealed.

From then on, it was only a matter of months before the actors became the world's first movie stars, with loyal fans who patronized all of the films they appeared in—and the "star system" was "inadvertently" born!

Stars help make movies accessible and interesting to viewers, and they promote empathy in a major way.

Synergy

Viewers readily identify with a charismatic star's performance, and complete screen synergy is achieved.

So, let's not debunk stardom, and instead find ways to keep its powers within the context of the entire filmmaking system.

This includes placing reasonable limits on stellar talent fees. It was only in the 1960s that Elizabeth Taylor set a record in terms of what she was paid for playing the title role in "Cleopatra" ($1 million).

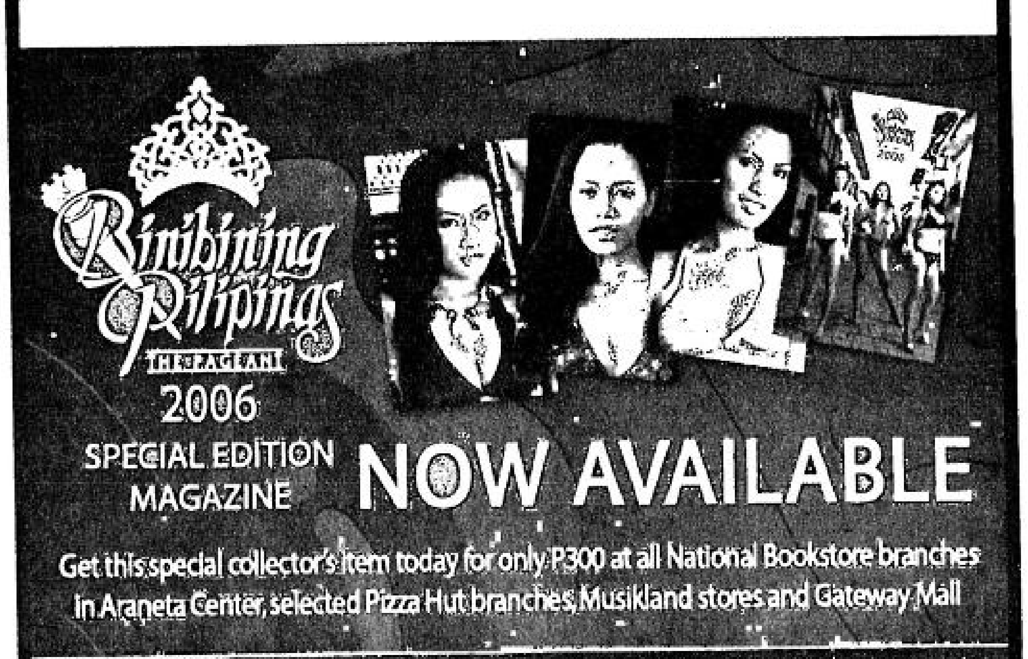
Today, quite a number of superstars rate the top fee of $20-M per film, with a few super-duper luminaries getting even more than that.

They break the bank by getting paid, not just for acting, but also for executive-producing their starrers.

They can make even more by foregoing their hefty talent fees in favor of "producing profit percentage points" that are paid to them once their latest film starts making money. If the movie is a blockbuster, its top star could end up making $50 million!

PLACING/ A4-4

TAYLOR. In the '60s, she set a record by getting paid $1 million for "Cleopatra."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Mickey Rooney's stardom defies time

ROONEY. He sings, acts, dances, and plays six musical instruments.

By Behn Cervantes

MICKEY ROONEY IS ONE OF Hollywood's most enduring stars. This Brooklyn-born ball of fire can sing, dance, act, and play six musical instruments.

The pint-sized talent was born Joe Yule Jr. 86 years ago. His career spans from the silent-film era and Hollywood's Golden Years to today. "I've had it all!," Rooney rightfully stated.

Peak

He has also starred with—and married!—some of Tinseltown's most beautiful actresses. He reached the peak of his career when he was just a teenager.

He has continued to appear in films long after his reign as Hollywood's *Numero Uno* box-office star ended.

Rooney made his first stage appearance when he was only 15 months old! By the age of six, he was performing alongside his parents in vaudeville. The talented tyke was quickly noticed by Hollywood talent scouts. He was tapped to portray Mickey McQuire, the popular comic character, on a profitable series that made him a star to reckon with.

MGM loaned him to Warner Bros. to portray Puck in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer's Night's Dream," and his performance was considered one of the most outstanding acting feats by an adolescent.

Series

He gained a permanent foothold in show business when he successfully developed the character of Andy Hardy in a series that teamed him up with another talented dynamo, Judy Garland.

Like Judy, Mickey gained critical praise for his numerous portrayals, like the disturbed teenager in "Boys' Town," where he pitted his dramatic prowess against Spencer Tracy, no less. Tracy later described Rooney as "an awfully talented kid."

A recipient of a special Oscar, Mickey wrote extensively about his career's ups and downs—and his marriages.

Ebullient

Being an ebullient young fellow, Mickey often lived the fast life. He married the glorious Ava Gardner when she was only 17, and remarried seven more times in his search for marital bliss.

When asked when he would retire, Rooney stated: "Never! I'll sing, dance and act for as long as the public welcomes me!"

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John Pratts

Manila date with Say Alonzo and John Pratts is scheduled on April 8, 2006 instead of April 1, as approved by DOH-BFAD.

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Because it's there

By Nestor U. Torre

RECENT REPORTS THAT A TEAM OF Filipino mountain climbers is preparing to scale up to the peak of the world's tallest mountain, Mt. Everest, has bemused local film buffs because it calls to mind the '90s film about a group of spirited dreamers from the Caribbean who had the gumption to join the Winter Olympics.

Like the first *Pinoy* Everest climbing expedition, that film was an unexpected event because there's no snow in the Caribbean, so how could a team from that region even hope to do well in the Winter Olympics?! And yet, that's exactly how it fared.

Snow

We hope, of course, that things will turn out as well for "our" Everest team, even if the only snow to be found in the Philippines is in a glass of *halo-halo*.

Even as we wish the team the best, however, we look up our book on Everest and note with some trepidation that Broughton Coburn's tome is titled "Everest—Mountain Without Mercy."

Sledding for fun and medals at the Winter Olympics is one thing, but the Everest challenge is obviously quite another. We trust that our team is fully aware of this, and has done everything to make the daunting challenge a reality without risking life, limbs—and lungs!

These facts should help put the imminent *Pinoy* "assault" on Everest's summit in clarifying perspective:

It was only half a century ago that Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first climbers to stand at the peak of Mt. Everest, with literally the rest of the world spread out beneath them.

Stunning feat

Since then, hundreds of other mountain climbers have attempted to duplicate their stunning feat, but the challenge is so daunting and dangerous that more than 150 challengers have perished.

Fact is, life is constantly threatened by death in Everest's hostile, high-altitude and bone-chilling environment, where no human can survive for long.

The most tragic event in the mountain's history, in 1966, claimed eight lives, including two of the world's top climbing expedition leaders. The fatal factor was a deadly blizzard, from which there proved to be no escape.

But, Everest is also the story of triumph of man against the worst that nature has to throw at him, and we trust that this will be the theme of the imminent Filipino ascent to the summit of the world's tallest peak.

Veteran climbers point out that, if everything goes right, Everest is very "climbable." But, if anything goes wrong (and mistakes can be made easily and quickly by even the best climbers), people can perish.

Virtually impossible

Experts say that it's virtually impossible for guides to save anyone above the South Col, a place where every climber must be self-reliant. After Camp IV, they add, the time for "coaching" from the guides is over.

We trust that our climbers have taken these and other caveats into consideration, and have prepared themselves to handle any eventuality. And so, the *Pinoy* team sets off to conquer the world's tallest mountain—because it's there!

Placing...

From page A4-3

All this is great for the star, but could wreak havoc on a film's budget, with lesser actors and members of the production team getting a relative pittance, because the bulk of the budget has gone to attracting the top star to grace the production with his stellar clout.

Budget

To make sure that this unjust situation can no longer happen, percentage limits may be set for stellar fees, up to a maximum of 30 percent of a production's total budget.

Stars should also inhibit themselves from taking unfair advantage of their box-office clout and ordering other members of the production team around to suit their whims and caprices.

They should keep reminding themselves that they aren't scriptwriters, directors, cinematographers and editors, and expend their energies on coming up with superlative performances, period.

If they can make these important adjustments, stars can remain an important and integral part of the filmmaking process, while giving their co-workers enough leeway—and respect—so they can do *their* work with similar enthusiasm and creativity.

MAGBAYAD NG TAMANG BUWIS
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9 DAYS TO GO
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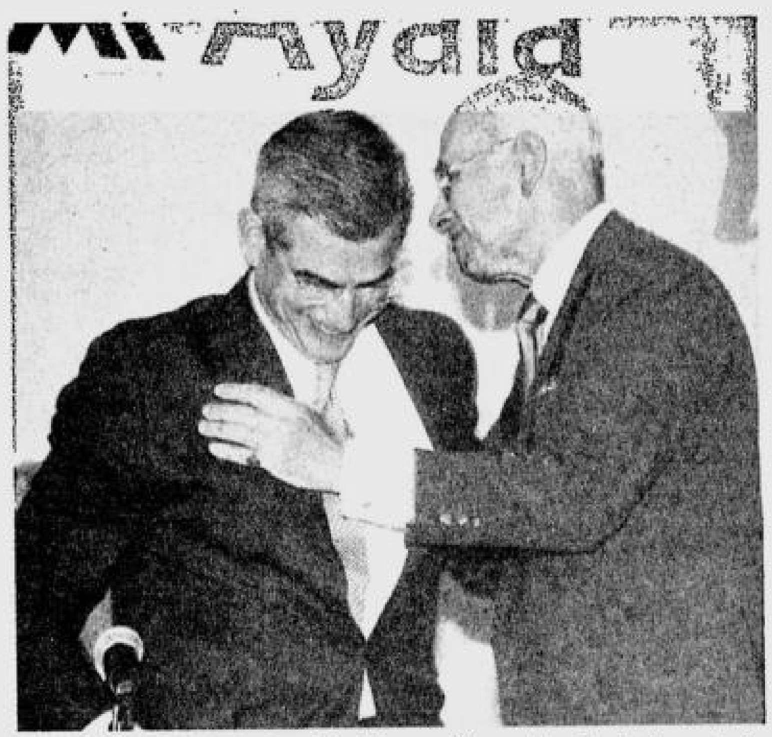
Emotional changing of the guard at Ayala



JAIME Zobel de Ayala gives his eldest son, incoming Ayala Corp. chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, a hug at the end of the company's shareholders' meeting Friday at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila.

Don Jaime turns over control to eldest son, Jaza

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AN EMOTIONAL CHANGING OF THE GUARD MARKED THIS year's annual stockholders' meeting of Ayala Corp., the Philippines' oldest and fourth biggest conglomerate in terms of revenues.

Jaime Zobel de Ayala, 71, formally announced before stockholders his retirement from the multibillion-peso company he has helped build in the last 49 years.

Zobel, among Forbes magazine's richest man with assets of $1.3 billion, was applauded twice, the first for almost half a minute after his brief speech, and the second, which drew a standing ovation, after a film clip showcased his achievements in the company.

"As a 172-year-old company, Ayala continues to grow, and will continue to be dynamic and ever faithful to its traditional values and principles, ever conscious of its role in economic development, and its obligation to contribute to the betterment of the quality of life for the Filipino," Zobel said in his speech.

"I am presiding over Ayala's annual general meeting for the 23rd and last time. As I look back on all these years, I reminisce about the decisions I had to make at crucial times. No doubt, I have had my share of triumphs and disappointments but, on the balance, the overall experience has been gratifying and rewarding. It has been an immensely fulfilling professional life," Zobel said.

Zobel dodged questions on what he planned to do during his retirement, simply saying, "That's my secret."

EMOTIONAL/ B2

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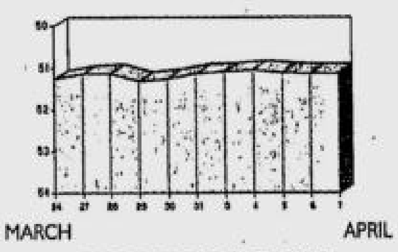

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As of 5 p.m., April 7, 2006

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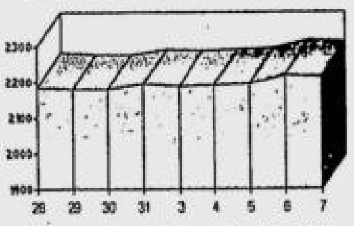
STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks down on profit-taking

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.16-percent lower yesterday as investors took modest profits after sharp gains Thursday, dealers said.

The pullback followed two days of gains that brought the market to its highest level in nearly seven years, with trade expected to be

STOCKS/ B2

PSE names new board today

THREE GROUPS ARE SEEN VYING FOR CONtrol of seven broker seats at today's Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) elections using proxy votes, INQUIRER sources said.

The exchange is holding its annual stockholders' meeting and will elect a new 15-member board—seven to be occupied by stockbrokers and eight by private sector nominees.

Veteran broker Vivian Yuchengco has teamed up with fellow PSE director William

PSE/ B2

$20.84B IN END-MARCH

Forex reserves hit historic high

By Doris C. Dumlao

STRONG FOREIGN INFLOWS LIFTED the country's gross international reserves to a new historic high of $20.84 billion at end-March, up by 1.2 percent from $20.59 billion in February.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Officer in Charge Nestor Espenilla Jr. said the high GIR level was due "mainly to the deposit by the national government of its loan proceeds, as well as the Bangko Sentral's foreign exchange operations and income from investments abroad."

The GIR build-up over the past few months has been supported by proceeds from the front-loading of the government's foreign borrowings, remittances from overseas Filipino workers and, to a certain extent, foreign direct investment and portfolio inflows.

In the first quarter alone, the government raised $2.1 billion from fresh global bond offerings. But these inflows were partly offset by payments of maturing foreign obligations of the public sector, which ac-

FOREX/ B2

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374-39-11 / 411-27-20
SUZUKI AUTO SHAW
411 Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
718-1834 to 35
PROVINCIAL
SUZUKI AUTO BACOLOD
Manor Bldg., Araneta St., Singcang Bacolod City
(034) 435-0288
SUZUKI AUTO CABANATUAN
Maharlika Highway, Cabanatuan City
(044) 463-5248 / 463-0080
SUZUKI AUTO CAGAYAN DE ORO
Mindanao Motor Compound Corrales Ave., Cagayan de Oro City
(088) 227-26357
SUZUKI AUTO CEBU
CDO Foodsphere Bldg., A. S. Fortuna St., Banilad, Mandaue City
(032) 345-8893 / (032) 345-0507
SUZUKI AUTO DAGUPAN
National Highway, Ambonao, Calasiao, Pangasinan
(075) 517-17-17 / 8888 / 9999
SUZUKI AUTO DAVAO
Bo. Pampanga, Sasa, Davao City
(082) 233-1140 / 234-0390
SUZUKI AUTO ILOILO
Tabuk, Suba, Iloilo City
(033) 320-9643
SUZUKI AUTO LEGASPI
408 Rizal St., Cabangan, Legaspi City
(054) 472-3577 to 79 / 472-3859
SUZUKI AUTO PAMPANGA
Olongapo-Gapan Road City of San Fernando, Pampanga
(045) 860-5971 / (045) 961-3573
SUZUKI AUTO ZAMBOANGA
Veterans Ave. cor. Tomas Claudio St., Zamboanga City
(062) 991-1492 / 991-1126
SUZUKI Way of Life!
www.suzuki.com.ph

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 7, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36.5	36.5	35.5	35.5	164,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62	62	62	62	1,578,500
China Banking Corp.	725	730	725	725	650
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	17.5	19	1,500
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.47	2,770,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	71	71.5	69.5	71.5	481,100
International Exch. Bank	33	33	32.5	32.5	4,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38.5	38.5	38	38.5	1,558,000
Philippine National Bank	34.5	35	34	34	11,000
Phil. Savings Bank	39	40	39	40	5,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	29,800
Security Bank Corp.	47	47.5	46	47.5	69,300
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	200,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	1,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	28	28	28	28	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3230	3240	3230	3240	1,500
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	0.99	0.99	50,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	175	185	175	185	10,910
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2170	2170	2170	2170	190
Ivantage Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.04	1.04	5,409,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	44	44	43	44	150,600
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45.5	46.5	45.5	46.5	1,345,900
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	14.5	14	14	13,500
Manila Electric Co. B	21.25	21.5	21.25	21.5	160,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	10,144,000
Petron Corp.	4.5	4.55	4.4	4.45	14,850,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	80,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	1,000
CADP Group Corp.	2	2	2	2	20,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	352,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	37	37	36	36.5	128,700
Pancake House Inc.	4.05	4.05	4.05	4.05	13,000
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.73	0.7	0.71	11,370,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.7	2.75	2.7	2.75	108,000
San Miguel Corp. A	60	60.5	60	60	99,500
San Miguel Corp. B	80.5	80.5	79	79	105,600
Universal Robina Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.5	18.75	192,200
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	4,230,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.56	1.58	1.52	1.58	3,722,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.35	4.5	4.35	4.5	1,120,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	2,000,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.0075	121,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.008	0.009	0.008	0.009	8,000,000
Ayala Corp.	355	365	350	350	643,790
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	80,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.2	5.8	5.2	5.7	4,801,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	1,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	100,000
APC Group Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	2,000,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	27,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.85	0.86	0.85	0.86	300,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	8.7	9	8.7	8.7	42,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1	1	1	1	5,130,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.55	945,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.85	2.95	2.85	2.95	294,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.34	1.34	60,000
Medco Holdings	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	100,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	5,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	2,300,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	65,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	1,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	3,450,000
SM Investments Corp.	227	228	223	227	1,083,080
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	100,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	11	11.25	11	11.25	3,458,700
Belle Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	6,984,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.91	0.91	100,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	650,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.82	1.82	780,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.66	1.7	1.66	1.66	22,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	1,050,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	60,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.66	0.67	0.65	0.66	4,560,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	1,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.34	1.36	1.34	1.34	4,372,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.2	200,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	400,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.54	0.55	1,310,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	200,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.28	43,160,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.25	0.28	0.25	0.27	3,480,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	15,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.29	0.29	0.26	0.27	2,730,000
SM Development Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.6	1.6	160,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.7	7.8	2,198,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	11,090,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	35,600
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	3,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.99	760,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	885	885	870	870	23,560
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.05	3.05	3	3.05	1,299,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1970	1975	1960	1975	19,750
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.19	0.185	0.19	550,000
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	14,000,000
Ionics Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	5,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	3,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	200,000
Philweb Corp.	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.024	30,600,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.48	2.48	357,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	12.5	12.5	12.25	12.5	641,500
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,698,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.74	1.8	1.74	1.76	556,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.3	1,430,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.45	70,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	75,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	1.72	1.86	1.72	1.74	59,000
Paxys Inc.	9.4	9.4	9.2	9.3	111,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.44	1.5	1.44	1.44	2,351,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.5	1.52	1.48	1.5	707,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	507,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	1,155,000
Benguet Corp. A	8.2	8.5	8.2	8.3	130,000
Benguet Corp. B	25	25	25	25	800
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.52	1.64	1.52	1.64	523,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.29	0.26	0.28	83,150,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.32	29,750,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.021	170,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.03	0.03	0.029	0.03	57,100,000
Omico Corp.	0.007	0.0075	0.0065	0.0065	1,582,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	3	3.15	3	3.05	11,162,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	3.05	3.15	3	3.1	13,337,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28	27	27.5	621,300
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	1,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	880,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.245	0.245	800,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	32,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	10,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.52	100,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.52	0.52	0.51	0.51	250,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.8	3.8	197,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series N	10.5	11	10.5	11	400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	11	11	11	11	900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	11	11	11	11	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	11	11	11	11	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	11	11	11	11	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	11	11	11	11	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	11	11	11	11	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	11	11	11	11	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	12.75	13	12.5	12.5	481,500

Megaworld sets offer price at ₱1.38/share

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PROPERTY DEVELOPER MEGAworld Corp. has set the price for its 3.9 billion primary and secondary shares at P1.38 a share.

Megaworld said in a disclosure yesterday that the offer price was a 9-percent discount to the 10-day weighted average price of the company shares of P1.51 a share.

Megaworld closed at P1.56 a share last April 6.

At 3.9 billion shares—consisting of 3.5 billion primary and 423.2 million secondary shares—Megaworld is seen raising roughly P5.4 billion.

Secondary shares would be sold by US investment fund Colony-CB Richard Ellis.

Megaworld also has an option to issue additional 588.5 million in new shares, which will hike its total primary offer from 3.5 billion to 4.09 billion shares.

Should Megaworld exercise its greenshoe option, its total offering, including secondary shares could raise P6.2 billion.

The offer period for Megaworld shares will run from April 10 to April 18, while the listing date is slated for April 24.

The trading of the shares was suspended starting April 7 and will last until April 21.

Megaworld, a developer of upscale residential and office condominiums and leisure and resorts projects, last month said the proceeds from the sale would be used to fund capital expenditures till 2007.

Megaworld, listed since June 1994, posted a net income of P1.15 billion in 2005, 42.3 percent higher than the P807.7 million reported in 2004.

CURRENCIES

April 7, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.817661	1.000000	51.1190
Japan	Yen	0.006949	0.008499	0.4345
United Kingdom	Pound	1.433197	1.752800	89.6014
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.105387	0.128888	6.5886
Switzerland	Franc	0.633944	0.775314	39.6333
Canada	Dollar	0.709406	0.867604	44.3510
Singapore	Dollar	0.508876	0.622355	31.8142
Australia	Dollar	0.597400	0.730620	37.3486
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.169324	2.653083	135.6229
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.218031	0.266652	13.6310
Brunei	Dollar	0.507297	0.620424	31.7155
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000091	0.000111	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.021405	0.026178	1.3382
UAE	Dirham	0.222626	0.272272	13.9183
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.223000	62.5185
Argentina	Peso	0.265906	0.325203	16.6241
Brazil	Real	0.383608	0.469153	23.9826
Denmark	Kroner	0.134014	0.163899	8.3784
India	Rupee	0.018379	0.022477	1.1490
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.223039	0.272777	13.9441
Mexico	New Peso	0.073697	0.090131	4.6074
New Zealand	Dollar	0.502867	0.615006	31.4385
South Africa	Rand	0.135318	0.165494	8.4599
Korea	Won	0.000858	0.001049	0.0536
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025319	0.030965	1.5829

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Forex reserves hit historic high

From page B1

counts for 67 percent of the country's $54.2-billion external debt as of end-2005.

The GIR—consisting of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, special drawing rights (the currency of the International Monetary Fund) and foreign investments—is an indicator of the country's ability to service the foreign exchange requirements of the economy for importation and debt servicing.

Espenilla said the current GIR level was adequate to cover about 4.3 months' worth of imports of goods and payments of services.

The BSP also reported that the net international reserves, which factored in the revaluation of reserve assets and reserve-related liabilities, also increased to $20.22 billion, higher by 1.4 percent from the end-February level of $19.94 billion.

The NIR is computed as the difference between the GIR and its total short-term liabilities and use of multilateral credits.

Stocks down ...

From page B1

modest next week ahead of the Easter holiday break.

The composite index fell 3.64 points to 2,216.73 after trading between 2,207.05 and 2,221.76. Volume was 2.89 billion shares worth P1.32 billion. Losers led gainers 44 to 39, with 58 stocks unchanged.

The all-shares index was down 4.49 points at 1,096.94.

"Some investors took profits ahead of what is expected to be a very dull trading week. The market is in vacation mode," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings Inc.

The market will be closed on April 13 and 14 for the Easter weekend. Trading will resume on April 17. *AFP*

PNB
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PUBLIC AUCTION

MAY 4, 2006 • THURSDAY • 2:00 PM • THE TAIPAN REST. HOTEL - VALENCIA, Pob. Hway., Valencia City, Bukidnon

BUKIDNON

DON CARLOS

LOT 1 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 1,000.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 528.00 sqm.
Lot 6331 (Lot 6294-B) Abad Santos St., Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 926,000.00

MALAYBALAY

LOT 2 - WITH MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 247.00 sqm.
Lot 2352 Prov'L. Road, Casisang
Minimum Bid Price : 148,500.00

LOT 3 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 753.00 sqm.
Lot 1463 Brgy. Road, Linabo
Minimum Bid Price : 96,050.00

LOT 4 - WITH FULLY DEPRECIATED IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 949.00 sqm.
Lot 1434 Brgy. Road, Linabo
Minimum Bid Price : 71,250.00

LOT 5 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 26,673.00 sqm.
Lot 1300 & 1307 Brgy. Patpat,
Minimum Bid Price : 316,350.00

MARAMAG

LOT 6 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 74,412.00 sqm.
Lot 395 Bayabason.
Minimum Bid Price : 781,200.00

LOT 7 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 2,337.00 sqm.
Lot 715 Old Sayre Highway Dologon
Minimum Bid Price : 413,250.00

LOT 8 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 32,563.00 sqm.
Lot 729 Provincial Road Dologon
Minimum Bid Price : 391,200.00

LOT 9 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 201.00 sqm.
Lot No. 6672, # 0889 Prov'L. Road, M. Del Pilar St., North Poblacion,
Minimum Bid Price : 152,000.00

LOT 10 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 317.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 78.00 sqm.
Lot 6760 (Pls-98 Ext.) M. L. Quezon Ave., South Poblacion,
Minimum Bid Price : 517,600.00

LOT 11 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
LA: 369.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 148.00 sqm.
Lot 6759 (Lot 37), Quezon Ave., North Pob.
Minimum Bid Price : 738,750.00

LOT 12 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 583.00 sqm.
Lot 3554 Brgy. Rd. Base Camp
Minimum Bid Price : 93,600.00

QUEZON

LOT 13 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 36,333.00 sqm.
Lot 3482 Nat'L Highway Palacapao
Minimum Bid Price : 232,800.00

LOT 14 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 70,118.00 sqm.
Lot 154 Puntian
Minimum Bid Price : 318,500.00

LOT 15 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 800.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 232.00 sqm.
Lot 940 Nat'L. Highway Cor. Brgy. Road, San Jose
Minimum Bid Price : 271,800.00

LOT 16 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 31,700.00 sqm.
Lot 867 San Jose
Minimum Bid Price : 155,400.00

LOT 17 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 580.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 228.00 sqm.
Lot 1680 Municipal Rd. Pob.
Minimum Bid Price : 584,250.00

LOT 18 - WITH MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 1,000.00 sqm.
Lot No. 655 Case 2
Minimum Bid Price : 525,000.00

LOT 19 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 404.00 sqm.
Lot No. 1041-D-1-B Quezon
Minimum Bid Price : 258,400.00

LOT 20 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 56,117.00 sqm.
Lot No. 554 Quezon
Minimum Bid Price : 359,200.00

LOT 21 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 1,600.00 sqm.
Lot 1041-D-1-C-1-A-12 & A-13-B Subd. Rd. Pob.
Minimum Bid Price : 384,000.00

LOT 22 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 400.00 sqm.
Lot No. 1041-D-1-C-1-A-4-B Subd. Road, Pob.
Minimum Bid Price : 128,000.00

LOT 23 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 400.00 sqm.
Lot No. 1041-D-1-C-1-A-4-C Subd. Road, Pob.
Minimum Bid Price : 128,000.00

LOT 24 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 782.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 239.00 sqm.
Lot 556 Jose Rizal St., Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 892,000.00

LOT 25 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 12,800.00 sqm.
Lot 1171 Farm Road, Libertad
Minimum Bid Price : 106,000.00

LOT 26 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 41,700.00 sqm.
Lot 1149, Farm Road, Libertad
Minimum Bid Price : 344,000.00

LOT 27 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 6,350.00 sqm.
Lot 1627 Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 95,000.00

VALENCIA

LOT 28 - WITH FULLY DEPRECIATED IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 645.00 sqm.
Lot 677 Brgy. Road, Bagontaas,
Minimum Bid Price : 170,400.00

LOT 29 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 540.00 sqm.
Lot 5-A-3-C Subd. Road, Flores Subd. Bagontaas,
Minimum Bid Price : 160,650.00

LOT 30 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 600.00 sqm.
Lot No. 49-P Brgy. Road, Brgy. Bagontaas, .
Minimum Bid Price : 153,000.00

LOT 31 - WITH DILAPIDATED IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 300+600= 900.00 sqm.
Lot 79-E-2 & E-1 Brgy. Road, Sugod Road, Bagontaas,
Minimum Bid Price : 202,500.00

LOT 32 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 1,302.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 161.00 sqm.
Lot 5-A-11-B, Bagontaas,
Minimum Bid Price : 684,450.00

LOT 33 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 844.00 sqm.
Lot 7-B-1-A-2 Subd. Road Bagontaas,
Minimum Bid Price : 202,400.00

LOT 34 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 593.00 sqm.
Lot No. 79-F-4 Brgy. Road, Bagontaas,
Minimum Bid Price : 142,400.00

LOT 35 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 20,001.00 sqm.
Lot 102-A Brgy. Rd., Upper Bagontaas
Minimum Bid Price : 288,000.00

LOT 36 - WITH DILAPIDATED IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 825.00 sqm.
Lot 47-A-3 Subd. Rd. Bagonta-As
Minimum Bid Price : 132,000.00

LOT 37 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 59,885.00 sqm.
Lot 2754-L & 2754-A Int. Lot, Buyog, Banlag
Minimum Bid Price : 670,600.00

LOT 38 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 59,886.00 sqm.
Lot 2754-J Brgy. Rd., Buyog, Banlag
Minimum Bid Price : 670,600.00

LOT 39 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 799.00 sqm.
Lot 523 Prov. Rd., Bo. Barangan
Minimum Bid Price : 192,000.00

LOT 40 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 803.00 sqm.
Lot 2549 Brgy. Road, Balangan
Minimum Bid Price : 96,000.00

LOT 41 - WITH DILAPIDATED IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 659.00 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 8 Subd. Road, Hagkol
Minimum Bid Price : 1,318,400.00

LOT 42 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 749.00 sqm.
Lot No. 2-D Nat'L. Hway. Hagkol
Minimum Bid Price : 1,067,800.00

LOT 43 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 748.00 sqm.
Lot No. 2-O Nat'L. Hway. Hagkol
Minimum Bid Price : 1,065,900.00

LOT 44 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 213.00 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 4 Subd. Road, Juanilla Subd., Hagkol
Minimum Bid Price : 181,050.00

LOT 45 - WITH DILAPIDATED IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 838.00 sqm.
Lot 179 Brgy. Road, Lumbayao
Minimum Bid Price : 142,800.00

LOT 46 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 838.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 110.00 sqm.
Lot No. 179 Lumbayao
Minimum Bid Price : 142,400.00

LOT 47 - WITH FULLY DEPRECIATED IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 285.00 sqm.
Lot 4 Sayre Hway, Brgy. Lumbo
Minimum Bid Price : 153,900.00

LOT 48 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 98.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 42.00 sqm.
Lot 12-N-2 Brgy. Road, Lumbo
Minimum Bid Price : 157,500.00

LOT 49 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 472.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 203.00 sqm.
Lot 2-J, Lumbo
Minimum Bid Price : 805,500.00

LOT 50 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 778.00 sqm.
Lot 239-I, 239-G & 239-H Nat'l. Highway, Purok 3, Lumbo
Minimum Bid Price : 443,650.00

LOT 51 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 356.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 69.00 sqm.
Lot No. 363 Lurugan
Minimum Bid Price : 174,750.00

LOT 52 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 993.00 sqm.
Lot 2-A-2-A Old Nat'L. Hway. Mailag
Minimum Bid Price : 79,200.00

LOT 53 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 1,453.00 sqm.
Lot 2-A-2-B & 2-A-2-C Old Nat'L. Highway, Mailag
Minimum Bid Price : 87,200.00

LOT 54 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 2,835.00 sqm.
Lot 2-A-2-D, 2-A-2-E, 2-A-2-F & 2-A-2-G Old Nat'L. Hway. Mailag
Minimum Bid Price : 176,000.00

LOT 55 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 603.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 72.00 sqm.
Lot 358 Nat'L. Highway Cor. Brgy. Road, Patag, Bagontaas
Minimum Bid Price : 374,400.00

LOT 56 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 213.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 63.00 sqm.
Lot 336-C Nat'L. Highway, Patag, Bagontaas
Minimum Bid Price : 202,400.00

LOT 57 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 801.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 110.00 sqm.
Lot 330-9 Brgy. Road, San Isidro
Minimum Bid Price : 245,000.00

LOT 58 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 792.00 sqm.
Lot 330-4 Brgy. Road, San Isidro
Minimum Bid Price : 76,000.00

LOT 59 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 588.00 sqm.
Lot 8-D-4 Subd. Road, Tago Subd., Tagostos
Minimum Bid Price : 175,100.00

LOT 60 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 587.00 sqm.
Lot 8-D-5 Subd. Road, Tago Subd., Tagostos
Minimum Bid Price : 175,100.00

LOT 61 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 37,208.00 sqm.
Lot 21 Brgy. Road, Tugaya
Minimum Bid Price : 379,100.00

LOT 62 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 299.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 66.00 sqm.
Lot 30-F-2-A-7-C Existing Road, # 3594 Karway St., Yulo Subd., P-13, Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 231,200.00

LOT 63 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 192.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 150.00 sqm.
Lot 214 Mabini St.
Minimum Bid Price : 1,809,900.00

LOT 64 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 343.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 60.00 sqm.
Plan Plot No. 106-I-4 Alley, Purok 10, Poblacion,
Minimum Bid Price : 92,000.00

LOT 65 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 300.00 sqm.
Floor Area 90.00 sqm.
Lot 194-H-1 Municipal Road, # 2574 Purok 10, Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 484,800.00

LOT 66 - WITH FULLY DEPRECIATED IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 486.00 sqm.
Lot No. 2 M. Roxas St.
Minimum Bid Price : 949,200.00

LOT 67 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 206.00 sqm.
Lot 1-I-4-P-8 Orchid St., Purok 16, Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 175,100.00

LOT 68 - AGRILAND
Lot Area: 55,849.00 sqm.
Lot 455 Barobo
Minimum Bid Price : 418,500.00

LOT 69 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 275.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 196.00 sqm.
Lot 216-G Municipal Road, # 1193 Purok 4, Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 436,000.00

LOT 70 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 594.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 42.00 sqm.
Lot 262-B A. Bonifacio St., Pob.
Minimum Bid Price : 2,160,900.00

LOT 71 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 180.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 213.00 sqm.
Lot 330 T.N. Pepito St.
Minimum Bid Price : 1,224,000.00

LOT 72 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 752.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 112.00 sqm.
Lot No. 2-B-4 # 4266 Orchid St., P-16A, Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 514,500.00

LOT 73 - WITH MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area 114.00 sqm.
Lot 1 Brgy. Road & Subd. Road, Purok 13, Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 64,500.00

LOT 74 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 325.00 sqm.
Floor Area. 42.00 sqm.
Lot 195-L-8-D-1 Subd. Rd. Pob.
Minimum Bid Price : 234,000.00

LOT 75 - WITH MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 319.00 sqm.
Lot No. 2, M. Roxas St.
Minimum Bid Price : 881,400.00

LOT 76 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 519.00 sqm.
Lot 201-C-1 Purok 10, Pob.
Minimum Bid Price : 248,800.00

LOT 77 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 7,200.00 sqm.
Lot 226-Ee-17-C Garcia St. Prk 3
Minimum Bid Price : 5,040,000.00

LOT 78 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 430.00 sqm.
Lot 222-U-9-J Road Lot, Purok 4, Pob.
Minimum Bid Price : 137,600.00

LOT 79 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 444.00 sqm.
Lot 2 Blk 10, Subd. Road, Sunkiss Vill., Pob.
Minimum Bid Price : 248,800.00

LOT 80 - AGRILAND WITH MAKESHIFT IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 16,069.00 sqm.
Lot 28-B Brgy. Rd., Patag, Bagonta-As, Valencia
Minimum Bid Price . 231,000.00

LOT 81 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 400.00 sqm.
Floor Area 192.00 sqm.
Lot 7076 (Lot5560-A) Guinoroyan Road, Purok 10, Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 553,000.00

LOT 82 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 602.00 sqm.
Floor Area: 475.00 sqm.
Lot 1123 Alley, M. Fortich St., Poblacion
Minimum Bid Price : 836,000.00

LOT 83 - LOT & IMPROVEMENT
Lot Area: 802.00 sqm.
Floor Area. 240.00 sqm.
Lot 1686 Old Nat'L Hway, Dagatkidavao
Minimum Bid Price : 750,000.00

LOT 84 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 988.00 sqm.
Lot 7-B-1-C-6 Subd. Rd. Bagontas
Minimum Bid Price : 198,000.00

LOT 85 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 600.00 sqm.
Lot 7-B-1-A-5 Subd. Rd. Bagontaas
Minimum Bid Price : 120,000.00

LOT 86 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area. 601.00 sqm.
Lot 115-A-12 Subd. Rd. Brgy. Bagontaas
Minimum Bid Price . 48,000.00

LOT 87 - VACANT LOT
Lot Area: 40,571.00 sqm.
Lot 2-P Lurugan
Minimum Bid Price : 227,000.00

LOT 88 - VACANT LOT
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Lot A-11-C-7-B Brgy Rd.
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Emotional ...

From page B1

Zobel was also prevailed upon by stockholders to stay on as chair emeritus, an honorary position which will allow him to remain as the company's guiding force.

Zobel's retirement was seen by shareholders as ushering a "new order" led by his sons at the nearly two centuries-old conglomerate.

In a widely expected move, the company's board of directors elected Zobel's elder son and Ayala president Jaime Augusto, popularly known as Jaza in the business community, to succeed him as chair and chief executive.

Younger brother Fernando and Ayala's executive managing director assumes the role of president and chief operating officer.

Former Bank of the Philippine Islands president Xavier Loinaz was elected to fill up the vacancy left by Zobel in the seven-member board.

However, Jaime Augusto stressed that no radical changes would be made in the company, but Ayala "will continue to reinvent itself and continue to take advantage of opportunities in the country."

Ayala will explore opportunities in three sectors—services such as business process outsourcing projects, contact centers, healthcare management, finance and administrative work, and human resources; privatization opportunities in power, transmission and distribution and other infrastructure; and investment in specialized funds.

This year, Ayala is pumping in P40 billion in capital spending for projects, bulk of which will go to the 3G rollout of Globe Telecom and property projects of Ayala Land Inc.

PSE ...

From page B1

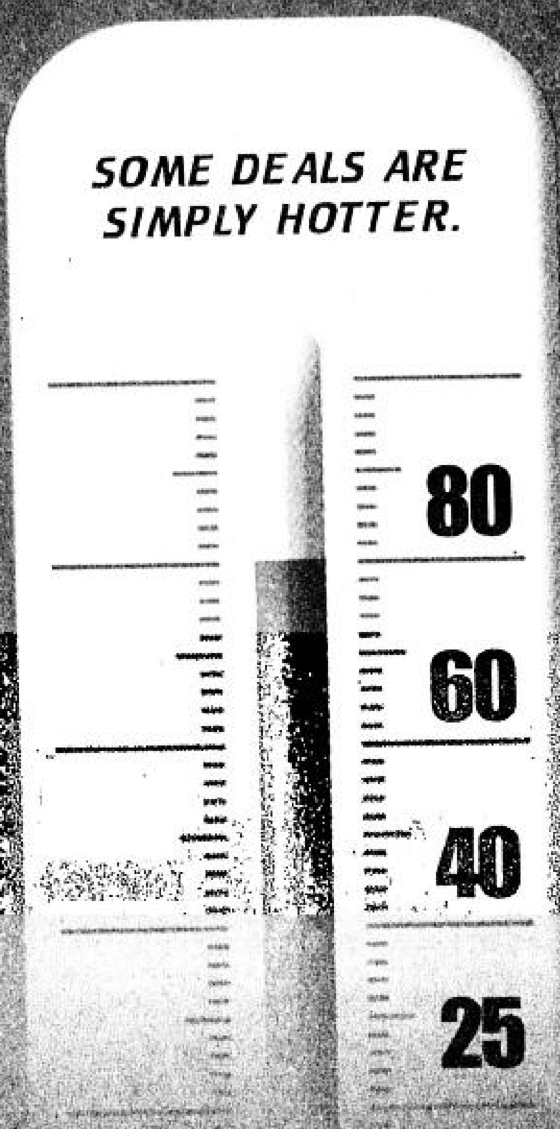
Ang of Astra Securities Corp., Myron Timothy Papa of Papa Securities and Francisco Villaroman of Securities Specialists Inc.

A second group, earlier associated with presidential sister-in-law and former bourse chair Alicia Rita Arroyo, is also expected to secure votes from the ATR Kim Eng Group and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. These are PSE director and Citiseconline.Com president Conrado Bate, Alejandro Yu of R.S. Lim & Co. and Rodolfo Cruz of HK Securities.

Independent broker candidates are seen to be the "third force" at work in today's polls. These are PSE director and veteran broker Robert Coyiuto Jr., Eddie Gobing of Lucky Securities, Marita Limlingan of Regina Capital, and Joseph Roxas of Eagle Equities.

Four candidates are being backed by institutions for three posts reserved for independent directors: Anabelle Chua of PLDT, Amor Iliscupidez of SMC, Roy Joseph Rafols to represent the interest of the GSIS, and Robert Atendido for market participants endorsed by the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines and the Investment Houses Association of the Philippines. The independent director candidates are Vitug, businessman Cornelio Peralta, and banker Jose Luis Javier. PSE president Francis Lim was also nominated to continue as president-director. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

This is as hot as it gets!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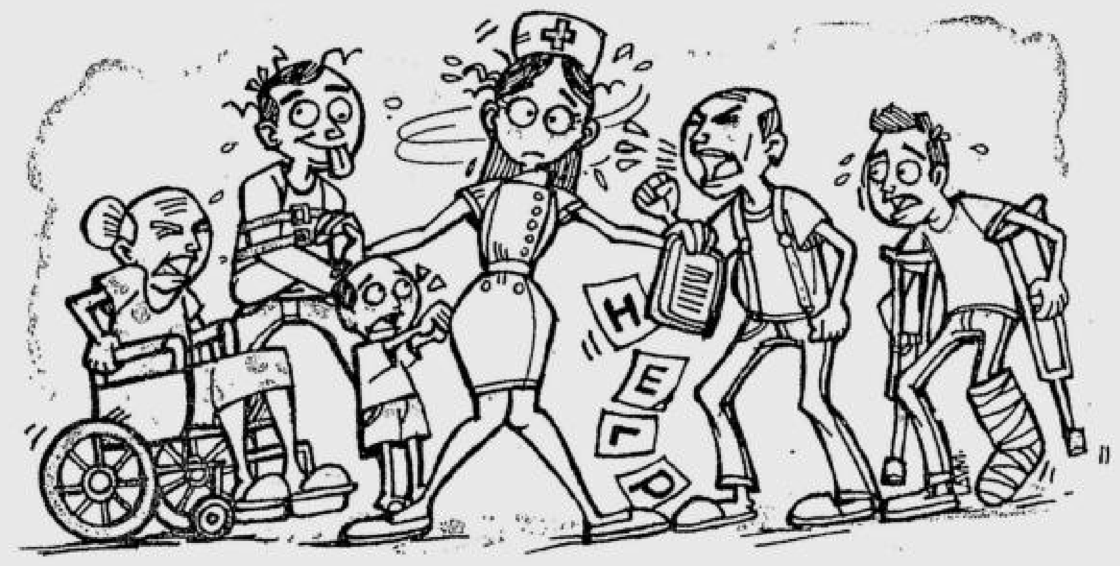
WHO calls on states to help avert crisis on health workers

By Charles E. Buban



ON ANY GIVEN day, scores of patients arrive at the government-run University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital with all sorts of medical complaints. From the elderly in wheelchairs who suffer from severe arthritis to young cancer patients trying to cope with their disease, the patients provide a daunting variety of ailments for the country's largest medical institution.

But equally daunting is the chronic shortage of doctors, nurses and other medical workers to treat them.

"Often, the number [of medical and support staff] is not enough to keep up with the demand," said Dr. Gerardo Cornelio, an oncologist at the UP-PGH.

According to the 2004 paper "Brain Drain Phenomenon and its Implications on Health" authored by Dr. Jaime Galvez-Tan, Fernando Sanchez and Virginia Balanon, the PGH loses 300 to 500 nurses of their 2,000 health workforce every year.

Tan is the executive director of the National Institutes of Health-Philippines and former secretary of health.

Critical shortage

Other hospitals elsewhere in the world experience the same problem.

The World Health Organization estimates that 4.25 million doctors, midwives, nurses, pharmacists, dentists and support staff are needed to fill the gap.

Acknowledging the severity of the situation, the WHO dedicated this year's World Health Day celebration (April 7) tackling the problems besetting the 59 million health workers worldwide.

The key issues raised included the increasing difficulty in training, supporting and retaining health workers, shortage of health educators and trainers, support staff and managers, and the continuing exodus of healthcare workers from the developing world where there is a critical shortage.

The WHO urged governments to take the lead in developing educated and well-trained health workers, ensuring safe and supportive working conditions, enhancing the effectiveness of the health workforce through new strategies, and tackling the now-widening imbalances and inequities in the availability and migration of health workers.

"Solutions to this crisis must be worked out at local, national and international levels, and must involve governments, the United Nations, health professionals, nongovernment organizations and community leaders," said Dr. Tim Evans, WHO assistant director general of the Evidence and Information for Policy cluster.

Possible activities

The WHO gave examples of activities that can be done by individuals and organizations, including:

- Advocating for the right to health to provide momentum for change and for increased accountability and transparency in health decision-making.
- Raising awareness of the scope of the health worker crisis and possible solutions.
- Policy advocacy (for example, in relation to the training, supporting and retaining of health workers).
- Research and intelligence gathering to better understand current health worker numbers and their distribution, and to inform effective interventions.
- Network building to engage different sectors and agencies in planning and implementing policies.
- Action monitoring to encourage interventions and measure their impact.

"At WHO, we feel that it is only right that Asia's healthcare workers be given the recognition they deserve for the vital contribution they make to all our lives," Dr. Shigeru Omi, WHO regional director for the Western Pacific, said in a statement.

"It is high time they were paid decent salaries and provided the right working conditions and the right equipment to do the work they are trained to do."

Multiplication trick

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

FELIMAR BLANCO [SIAGUON@hotmail.com], a Filipino now based in Houston, Texas, shares this multiplication trick, which he learned from his father back in Grade 4 in Aklan. He would periodically "fool around" with it in high school until he refined this "Ibajaynon Method."

For example, to multiply 3 5 8 9 and 7 2 4 1, write the multiplier in reverse (1427) on the edge of a small piece of paper. Then slide the piece of paper accordingly as shown below.

3589
1427 Multiply 9 and 1 to get 9. Jot 9.

3589
1427 Multiply 8 and 1 (8); then 9 and 4 (36).

Add 8 and 36 to get 44. Carry over 4 and jot 4 left of 9 so we now have 49.

3589 Carried 4
1427 Multiply 5 and 1 (5); then 8 and 4 (32); then 9 and 2 (18).

Add 4, 5, 32 and 18 to get 59. Carry over 5 and jot 9 so we now have 949.

3589 Carried 5
1427 Multiply 3 and 1 (3); then 5 and 4 (20); then 8 and 2 (16); then 9 and 7 (63).

Add 5, 3, 20, 16, 63 to get 107 Carry over 10 and jot 7 so we now have 7949.

3589 Carried 10
1427 Multiply 3 and 4 (12); then 5 and 2 (10); then 8 and 7 (56).

Add 10, 12, 10, 56 to get 88. Carry 8 and jot 8 so we now have 87949.

3589 Carried 8
1427 Multiply 3 and 2 (6); then 5 and 7 (35).

Add 8, 6, 35 to get 49. Carry 4 and jot 9 so we now have 987949.

3589 Carried 4
1427 Multiply 3 and 7 (21).

Add 4 and 21 to get 25. Jot 25 to get the final answer, which is 25987949.

Blanco says it is better to use the number with lesser digits as multiplier.

Sleepless doctors

Ronald [jayalbatross@yahoo.com] has this interesting question:

I have a cousin who finished medicine. I asked her how long she could stay awake at night studying. She said she could endure 24 to 36 hours with no sleep. Does staying awake for more than two days make a person crazy? I ask this because I wonder why doctors' minds can work even without sleep.

All of us have gone through a sleepless night or two from time to time, but this does not mean that it is healthy for us to do so. Numerous studies have shown that lack of sleep contributes to irritability, daytime fatigue, lack of concentration, impaired motor and cognitive skills, and even weight gain.

I have not come across any finding that says sleeplessness will make a person crazy, but I daresay it is not far-fetched to think so.

I asked my doctor friends about their sleeping habits. They admitted that they certainly needed more rest, and that their minds (and treatment of patients) would be less than ideal if they did not sleep for a couple of nights. So there is no truth to your last statement; doctors are human beings, too, and their minds cannot work as well without rest.

Books on math

Leonilo Lopido [statman252003@yahoo.com] has this query:

I am an avid reader of your column and I would like to ask for a list of your latest books that would help me explore the world of mathematics. I am a BS Statistics graduate and am currently employed at the Philippine Information Agency in Tacloban City. Is there a bookstore near my place where I can get hold of your books?

Several of my math books are published by Anvil, which means they should be available in the National Bookstore in your area. If not, please call Anvil at 637-5141/3621 and look for Lorie. You can also e-mail them at anvil-sales@eudoramail.com. Thank you for your support.

Undersea mysteries

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

THE SHORT-LIVED TV SERIES "SeaQuest DSV" used to start by saying that "beneath the [ocean's] surface...lies the future."

News reports bemoan the disappearance every day of numerous species of plants and insects that may hold the keys to treating diseases. The loss of these species often distracts from the knowledge that the seas hold mysteries of their own. Two recent papers demonstrate this.

First up: in last year's issue of Zoosystema, a scientific publication from the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, researchers from several countries wrote about a new genus and species of deep-sea crustacean.

White, hairy crustaceans

A year ago, lead author Michel Segonzac of the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (Ifremer) and his colleagues were exploring hydrothermal vents along the Pacific-Antarctic Ridge not far from the Galapagos Islands. It was part of an expedition organized by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute.

Scientists on board the submarine Atlantis noticed several white and hairy crustaceans near the vents.

They seemed to have marked territories, with only one to two of them every 10 square meters on the basalt layer surrounding the vents, although they shared the space with other species of crustaceans.

Yeti crabs

Scientists hypothesized that they were omnivorous, having seen them eating some mussels. Based on their physical appearance, the scientists called them Yeti crabs and collected a sample for study.

A look at a picture of the Yeti crab shows that it looks like a white crab with long pincers that seem to belong to a lobster, except that lobsters don't have furry pincers.

The fine filaments or setae covering their long pincer-like forearms were found to contain bacteria, which the scientists think might be used to detoxify minerals in the crab's surroundings.

Unlike other crabs

The creature is blind. But the pale eyes that weren't immediately obvious—being greatly reduced in size compared to other species—moved instead of remaining fixed in place, and were located near the antenulae.

In short, Segonzac et al. found that the Yeti crab wasn't really like other crabs, which is why they proposed that it belonged to a new family of its own and proposed the name Kiwa hirsuta. Kiwa is the Polynesian goddess of shellfish', while hirsuta is Latin for "hairy."

Lefties better

The second set of research with crab-related news doesn't have equally fascinating photos. Instead, Gregory Dietl from Yale University and Jonathan Hendricks from Cornell University have a brief and intriguing theory on why marine snails with left-handed shells are better off than their more common right-handed counterparts.

Better protection

First published online last March 21 in The Royal Society's journal Biology Letters, Dietl and Hendricks theorized that the sinistral shells better protect the tasty snails from preying right-handed crabs.

Many things in the world tend to be predominantly right-handed or dextral, from people themselves to the way organs curve in the body to amino acid structures. Shells are no exception; dextral shells are ones where the opening is on the right side when the apex (the pointed end) faces away from the shell's bearer.

It turns out that crabs, which are also predominantly right-handed, have a special tooth on their right pincers that they use to break and sort of unroll the snail's shell to get at its meal. When a right-handed crab tries to crack a left-handed shell, however, the opening is on the wrong side and the crab can't easily get at the snail.

Other shells, too

This theory is borne out in several pairs of whelk and cone snail shells examined by Dietl and Hendricks.

They're apparently not very good at mating and passing on the gene to more snails, though, since sinistral shell snails remain a minute portion of the population. But then the seas are also known for not revealing all of their secrets at once.

Aloe vera for heart disease, cancer?

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

REALLY?
YOU BETCHA

RITA NOLASCO OF BF HOMES Parañaque reacted to my comments last week regarding chelation therapy for coronary heart disease (CHD). She said her husband felt a lot better after undergoing a complete course of intravenous infusion of chelation drugs plus some oral supplements, including aloe vera.

I sincerely hope her husband's subjective or symptomatic improvement is really due to an actual reduction in the atherosclerotic obstruction of his coronary arteries. But "feeling better" does not necessarily mean that one is actually getting better. A placebo effect could not always be discounted.

It is best if he goes back to his heart doctor and have a repeat test to check his coronary arteries. If the repeat tests show remarkable regression or reduction in the atherosclerosis and no other drugs were taken, one can presume, but not conclude, that chelation therapy was the cause of the clinical improvement.

Study on aloe vera

I decided to look for scientific literature about the use of aloe vera for heart disease as it was the first time I heard about it.

I was able to locate a study on aloe vera for CHD prevention, authored by Dr. OP Agarwal and his colleagues and published in the August 1985 issue of the Angiology journal. A total of 5,000 patients with established CHD and who had chest pains were studied over five years.

Aloe vera and husk fiber were added to the diet in one group, which later showed a marked reduction in total serum cholesterol, serum triglycerides, fasting and postprandial (after eating) blood sugar level. These effects were more prominent in diabetics. A significant improvement in "good" cholesterol was also noted.

The patients showed a reduction in the frequency of anginal attacks and the investigators reported that drugs like verapamil, nifedipine, beta-blockers and nitrates were gradually reduced.

The exact mechanism of the two substances is not known, but the authors said it appeared that they act through their high fiber content. The authors said there was no untoward side effect and all 5,000 patients were still alive at the end of the study.

Although the patient population appears robust enough, I'm not too sure about the validity of the research protocol. Both aloe vera and husk fiber need further evaluation. As a general rule though, it is well accepted that a high-fiber diet is beneficial for heart patients.

Cancer therapy

I came across a several literature and commentaries from cancer specialists on the potential anticancer benefits of aloe vera. The potential for natural cancer therapy with supplements like aloe vera and melatonin has been suggested and these substances, called immunomodulants, may benefit certain forms of cancer.

Oncologist Glen Hyland from the Mayo Clinic reviewed the health histories of 100 cancer patients who used aloe vera therapy as a part of their cancer treatment. He marveled at the speed at which patients receiving glyconutrients from aloe vera experienced a reduction in the size of squamous cell carcinomas (lung) and oat cell carcinomas (usually originating in the bronchi or lungs).

And the patients' erythrocytes (red blood cells), leukocytes (white blood cells), and thrombocytes (platelets) did not diminish. A serious reduction in these blood elements is a potential threat in patients undergoing cancer chemotherapy.

Dr. Hyland commented that normal cells appeared protected and abnormal cells appeared more sensitive to treatment when aloe vera was made part of an integrated approach.

Available data are still not that conclusive. I would label them more as expert observations and opinions which, in the ladder of evidence-based medicine, hold the lowest position. But I have no objection to patients trying aloe vera, melatonin and other natural immunomodulants as an adjuvant supplement, and not as a replacement, to established forms of cancer therapy.

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR LICENSE

Notice is hereby given that **C-MAN MARITIME INC.** has filed an application with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration for a license to engage in sea-based recruitment.

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(PDI – April 8, 2006)

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OBITUARIES

"THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE"

THE BETHASDA SPRINGS OF HOPE HEALING MINISTRY WISHES TO ANNOUNCE THE PASSING AWAY OF THEIR BELOVED

SR. ANGELINA LORENTE LIM, FMM

June 17, 1917 - April 6, 2006

Body lies in state at Stella Maris College, Cambridge St., Cubao, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later.

In lieu of flowers donations to Sr. Angelina's projects will be greatly appreciated.

GUILLERMINA AÑONUEVO FLETA

OF LUCENA CITY

PEACEFULLY RETURNED TO HER CREATOR ON APRIL 6, 2006 AT THE AGE OF 89.

Her children **Msgr. Heraclio, Eugenio, Antonio** & **Florence, Renato** & **Grace, Joaquin Jr.** & **Cecille, Manuel** & **Annie**; sister, **Rosario** and brother, **Miguel**; Grandchildren, request the readers to pray for her eternal rest.

Her remains lie in state at Bishop Alfredo Ma. Obviar Hall, St. Ferdinand Cathedral, Lucena City. Holy Mass is offered at 7:30 p.m. daily.

She will be laid to rest at Lucena Memorial Park on April 11, 2006 after the 1:30 p.m. Mass.

NEECO II

NUEVA ECIJA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Calipahan, Talavera, Nueva Ecija
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The Nueva Ecija II Electric Cooperative, Inc. now invites Sealed Bids from eligible bidders to bid assorted scrap (iron/steel), unserviceable electrical equipment/devices office equipment and unserviceable vehicles.

The Bidding Documents may be purchased from Nueva Ecija II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (NEECO II) Main Office, Calipahan, Talavera, Nueva Ecija, Philippines, upon submission of a written application to the above and upon payment of non-refundable fee of THREE THOUSAND PESOS ONLY (P 3,000.00) in cash beginning April 3, 2006.

Sealed proposal will be received by the NEECO II-Committee on Disposal of Non-Performing Assets at NEECO II Main Office on or before 2:00 p.m., May 4, 2006 at which time and place of said proposal will be opened and read in the presence of Bidders or Bidder's authorized representatives who choose to attend. Late submission will not be accepted.

Pre-bid Conference and inspection of scrap materials will be conducted at the NEECO II Main Office at 2:00 p.m. on April 26, 2006.

All bids submitted must be accompanied by a bid security of not less than ten (10%) percent of the total bid price.

The NEECO II hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informalities therein and to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the cooperative.

(Sgd.) ENGR. JOSEPHINE L. BADIOLA
Chairperson, Committee on Disposal

(PDI--April 01 & 08, 2006)

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PCCI
In connection with the LENTEN WEEK, the PCCI will cease operations Beginning HOLY MONDAY (April 10) to Easter Sunday

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PMAP, University of Makati partner for Certificate in Labor Relations

THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT CENTER (HRMDC) of the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) partners with University of Makati in holding a certificate course in Compensation Management to equip the participants with the relevant knowledge, attitudes, and skills in the exercise of the human resource development functions. PMAP and the faculty of University of Makati designed the Certificate in Labor Relations (CLR) course, which will run for eight Saturdays starting May 13 to July 1, 2006 at the Graduate School Building of University of Makati in West Rembo, Makati City. The CCM course is part of PMAP's Diploma in Human Resource Management (DHRM) program. Completion of five PMAP certificate courses merits a post-graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management. The other certificate courses are Certificate in Human Resource Planning and Acquisition (formerly Recruitment-Selection Placement), Certificate in Organization Development, Certificate in Compensation Management, and Certificate in Human Resource Management (CHRD). For other information, please call PMAP at tel. nos. 726-1532/81/88.

SAGIP LINGAYEN GULF PROJECT

Sustaining the Management of Coastal Resources in Selected Municipalities in Lingayen Gulf

The University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute's (UPMSI) and Marine Environment and Resources Foundation (MERF) is implementing a 5-year project (2003-2007) to help Provinces of Pangasinan and La Union manage the coastal resources of Lingayen Gulf. We are looking for team members of integrity and excellence for the following positions:

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT LEAD FOR HABITATS

He or she shall be the component lead accountable for all activities of the Project related to the Habitats Component (Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Mangroves), and shall ensure that this component coheres well with the over-all Project Management Plan. He or she shall supervise Habitat Resources Management activities to achieve specific and overall project objectives and ensure that this component coheres well with the overall project management plan.

Qualifications:
- Master's in Environmental Science, Marine Science or other related fields
- Extensive experience in sustainable community-based programs for marine and mangrove protection and rehabilitation, at least 5 years experience in senior position.

ADMIN AND FINANCE OFFICER

He or she shall provide over-all administrative, personnel, financial and logistics management support to the Project. He or she shall facilitate periodic internal review and improvement of the Project financial management system and the preparation of six-monthly financial reports.

Qualifications:
- Master's in Development Finance or certified accountant with extensive experience in public and NGO/PO accounting
- Extensive experience in all aspects of Financial Management (i.e., system set-up, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of efficiency ratios). At least 5 years experience in a senior Administrative and Finance position.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

He or she shall provide administrative and human resources management support to the Project. He or she shall implement and monitor compliance with the administrative standards of the Project employees.

Qualifications:
- At least 3 years experience in a human resources management position
- High degree of attention to detail and quality of work
- Interpersonal, negotiation and conflict management skills.

Personnel to be hired should have a CWAG of 2.25 or better in academic subjects relevant to his/her expertise & shall be based in Bolinao, Pangasinan. Must be computer literate.

Please send your application letter, curriculum vitae and transcript of academic records on or before April 23, 2006. Applications that arrive after that date will be considered only if the positions are not yet filled.

Submit letter of interest and resume with transcript of academic records to:

PROJECT ADMINISTRATION OFFICER
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OBITUARIES

MIGUEL MA. EUGENIO MORAN Y ROXAS

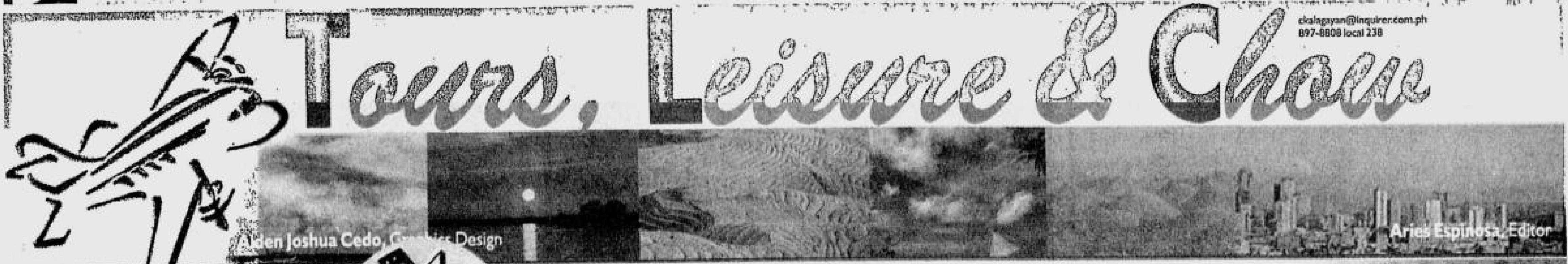
Passed into the light of our Lord on 5 April 2006 at the age of 47.

His bereaved mother, **Rosario**; daughter **Simone** & son-in-law **Roberto Herrera**; granddaughter **Niña**; brothers and sisters **Margarita** and **Antonio Floirendo**, **Ignacio** and **Eva**, **Lulette** and **Philip Monbiot**, **Sebastian** and **Charade**, **Francis** and **Alexandra**, **Martin** and **Concepcion**, and **Paul**, nieces and nephews request relatives, friends and readers to join in prayer for his soul's eternal peace.

His body lies in state in Redondo Beach, California.

Interment of his ashes will be at the Santuario de San Antonio Parish Church, Forbes Park, Makati City to be announced later.

Tours, Leisure & Chow



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An 'Easter Family Fair' at Dusit

DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO

CELEBRATE EASTER AT THE GRAND BALLroom of Dusit Hotel Nikko on April 16, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., and experience excitement and magic for the whole family with its "Easter Family Fair."

The "Easter Family Fair" creates a venue for families to bond with the exciting activity booths where you can play and win fabulous prizes. Not to be missed are the fun and entertaining activities lined-up for the kids like the: Kiddie Parlor Games; Acrobat Show; Mime Artist; Clown Balloon Twister; mascot appearances; jugglers; Caricature Artist Demo; Osh Kosh B'Gosh and Cinderella Fashion Show; Merit's art activity; and the much-awaited "a-MAZE-ing Egg Hunt" wherein kids will go inside a maze to hunt for Easter eggs. Major prizes in the egg hunt includes resort stay at the Pearl Farm Beach Resort, Taal Vista, Puerto Azul, day tour at The Farm at San Benito and accommodations in one of Dusit Hotel Nikko's luxurious guestrooms for the family aside from the many amazing prizes from Toy Kingdom, Nickelodeon, Learning is Fun, Garfield, Carebears, Mega Blocks and Poly Pocket.

Joining the Easter festivities is quite simple. Just avail of Dusit Hotel Nikko's sumptuous "Easter Family Brunch Buffet" at The Café for only P950++ for adults and P475++ for kids (12 years and below) to get your free access coupon to the event. Even better, stay in the Hotel and avail of the "Easter Room Package" (valid from April 10 to 16) and get your free access coupons to the Easter event. Dine in any of the hotel's Asian specialty restaurants on April 16, for a minimum single receipt purchase of P950, you get exclusive access to the "Easter Family Fair." Parents and guardians accompanying the kids are free of charge. The activities, freebies from Nestle Ice Cream, Chuckie, Trix, Purefoods, Regent, Wrigley's, Smileys and Egg Bites, among others and loot bags are for kids only.

The "Easter Family Fair" was organized to pay tribute to the family this summer in partnership with Metrobank Fun Savers Club, Royal Esquire Britanny, Rustan's Essences, Nestle Food Services, Universal Robina Corp, JJS Entertainment, Party Works, Enchanted Kingdom and Sky Cable.

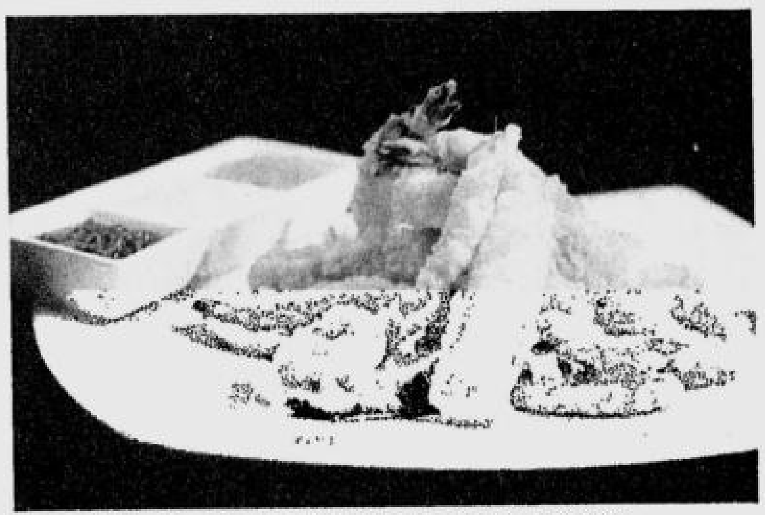
See you all at Dusit Hotel Nikko! For inquiries and reservations, call 867-3333.

Somerset reaches out to Leyte land slide victims

ASCOTT ONCE AGAIN DEMONstrates the Heartware philosophy of service from the heart and going the extra mile when Somerset Serviced Residences, Philippines goes beyond the walls of their three properties in Makati in their latest effort.

After a heavy downpour disintegrating a mountainside in Southern Leyte, a landslide burying numerous households and an elementary school in the eastern region of the Philippines ensued. This natural calamity has taken the lives of hundreds and left many homeless and in need of basic provisions.

Somerset Millennium, Somerset Olympia and Somerset Salcedo Makati thus initiated a three-week donation drive to help the unfortunate. Launched in Feb.23, the Somerset staff initiated the Leyte Landslide Donation Drive and lent a helping hand to the victims of the tragedy. Cash donations, and other necessities such as canned goods, blankets, old clothes and toiletries donated generously were presented to the Philippines National Red Cross, who coordinated the relief efforts for the landslide victims.



BELLEVUE'S TWO PLUS ONE EASTER PROMO
Make the most of the Holy Week break and escape from the maddening Easter rush with Bellevue's 2+1 Easter Promo. For every two nights stay or two rooms booked, get the third night or the third room for free. Available during April 14-16 at P3,800++ per night deluxe room accommodation with free breakfast at the Café D' Asie, use of swimming pool and gym facilities, complimentary shuttle service to nearby malls and business districts, welcome drink at 20/20 Entertainment Bar, welcome fruit plate, two bottles of mineral water replenished daily, and local newspaper. Plus, get two complimentary tickets to the Wild & Wacky Easter brunch event at the Bellevue Grand Ballroom on April 16. In time for the Lenten season, The Bellevue Hotel's 20/20 Entertainment Bar offers Seafood Fritto Misto, a deep-fried all-seafood platter with an assortment of delicious dips. Perfect for enjoying the Side A concert at April 21 or various bands playing nightly: Karaoke Night on Mondays, FM Band on Tuesdays, First Circle on Wednesdays, Silver on Thursdays, Soulid and Traffic Jam on Fridays and Music Ventures on Saturdays. For inquiries, call 771-8181.

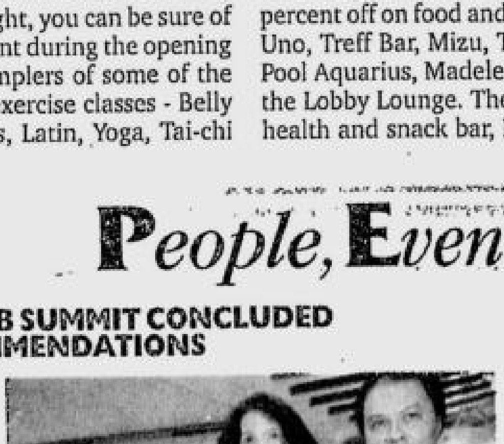
CitiGym grand launching at Waterfront

TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2006 MARKED THE grand unveiling of Cebu City's foremost fitness hotspot, CitiGym, where health and fitness enthusiasts gathered to catch a glimpse of what would definitely change the metro's way of fitness. A subsidiary of Waterfront Philippines Inc (WPI), CitiGym is the first and only gym in the city that is open 24 hours a day. With these hours of operation, a workout will always be possible during a busy day. Whether you're only free at the crack of dawn, or at the strike of midnight, you can be sure of a workout. Guests present during the opening were treated to live samplers of some of the Gym's different group exercise classes - Belly Dancing, Hi-lo Aerobics, Latin, Yoga, Tai-chi and Boxing powered by Red Corner Boxing Club, to name a few. Aside from exciting, heart-racing classes and the latest in fitness equipment, exclusive member perks and privileges await, such as secured and covered parking, hot and cold showers, sauna and steam bath, computerized fitness and lifestyle analysis tests and nutritional counseling. Best of all, CitiGym members are entitled to 50 percent off on the tariff rates of Waterfront Cebu City Hotel & Casino guestrooms and 10 percent off on food and beverage purchases at Uno, Treff Bar, Mizu, Tin Gow, Café Fortuna, Pool Aquarius, Madeleine, La Gondola and at the Lobby Lounge. The Gym also has its own health and snack bar, Powerhouse, which offers healthy yet delectable menu choices alongside access to free wireless internet. Now, going to the gym will not only be good for the body, but will also be a tasty treat for the mind. The Gym offers different membership packages specially tailored to fit varied lifestyle and fitness needs. Special discounted rates are also available for students, senior citizens and group enrollees.

CitiGym is located at the Lower Ground Floor of Waterfront Cebu City Hotel & Casino, Salinas Drive, Lahug, Cebu City. For more information and inquiries, you may call (032) 232-6888 local 8941 or Manila Sales and Reservations Office at (02)687-0888. You can also visit the website at www.waterfronthotels.net.

People, Events & Products

FIRST HEPATITIS B SUMMIT CONCLUDED WITH KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



Organizers of the First Hepatitis B Summit present vital recommendations and conclusions to Sen. Pia Cayetano, a staunch advocate of Hepatitis B awareness and prevention, who was also the guest speaker during the event. The summit, organized by the Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver (APASL), Hepatology Society of the Philippines (HSP), Philippine Foundation for Vaccination (PFV), Philippine Society for Gastroenterology (PSG), Philippine Cancer Society (PCS), and Philippine Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (PASLD), aims to raise awareness, as well as update and improve understanding about the disease among medical professionals. Photo shows (from left) Lo-ann Villanueva of GlaxoSmithKline; Sen. Pia Cayetano; and Dr. Jose Sollano, Jr. (APASL).

MMCFCC, SM Lazo Medical Clinic choose Insular's Salary Savings Insurance Program

MAKATI MEDICAL CENTER FAMILY CREDIT COOPERATIVE (MMCFCC) and SM Lazo Medical Clinic, two institutions devoted to providing health care services, have recently chosen Insular Life to provide their members and employees financial security through its Salary Savings Insurance Program (SSIP). The SSIP is a convenient premium payment facility for employees or members of private and government entities who want to buy ordinary life insurance for themselves and their immediate family members and pay premiums on a monthly mode through salary deduction. The MMCFCC is an institutional cooperative of Makati Medical Center regular employees, and the Remedios Trinidad Romualdez Memorial Schools, including MMC physicians and their regular staff. SM Lazo, on the other hand, provides pre-employment medical examination to OFW's and those seeking employment in local companies. Insular Life, now on its 96th year, continues to provide a wide-range of products for individual and group financial security needs. For information on group insurance plans, call 893-9683 or 817-3051 ext. 5048 and 3221 and individual life insurance plans, call 771-1818 ext. 1317-1320, or logon to www.insularlife.com.ph.

The Franchise Excellence Awards honors Brothers Burger

ON MARCH 20, BROTHERS BURGER claimed the Most Promising Filipino Franchise of the Year Award at the Franchise Excellence Awards for 2005.

The Awards were held at the Grand Ballroom of the Crowne Plaza Galleria at the Ortigas Center in Pasig City. The event was attended by a vast array of Philippine Business Luminaries that came from almost every sector of the industry: retail, food service, fashion, IT, even members of the academe and government made their presence felt.

The luminaries from Brothers Burger were led by Marinela K. Jose, the Brothers Burger CEO, and DJ Jose, Brothers Burger's finance head, who was accompanied by his wife Joy. Along with them were their top executives Estelita S. Ocampo and Rachel O. Pineda.

"We feel really honored," said Ocampo, "to be nominated and be one of the finalists is one thing, but to win the Most Promising Filipino Franchise Award for 2005 in our 7th year of business is truly something to be proud of! It challenges us to expand and to continue to partner with new franchisees and encourage more entrepreneurs."

The requirements for the award were very stringent. The event's sponsors, the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), required that all nominees for this yearly event be PFA members in good standing, have a solid franchising program that is understandable and beneficial to the franchisees, provide dependable logistical and business support, show solid growth and profitability in 2005, and cite examples of their corporate responsibility. And these are required just to become a finalist.

But as a beaming DJ Jose went up the stage and accepted the award, Brothers Burger took its rightful place among other franchise industry "movers and shakers" like Netopia, Greenwich, Julie's Bakeshop, Pancake House, and Goldilocks, making all the hard work of last year worth it. Brothers Burger won't be resting on their laurels though.

"We'll do even better next year!" said DJ. "It inspires us to consistently improve our operations and give our utmost support to our franchisees."

MDH HOLDS LIBRENG BUNOT

The Sama-sama sa Malusog na Baranggay (SMB), a community health program, organized by Manila Doctors Hospital (MDH), Metrobank Foundation and Manila Doctors College, recently concluded a one day dental mission for residents of Baranggay 178, Maricaban Pasay. The activity coincided with the celebration of the Dental Health Month. The dental mission was spearheaded by the Department of Dental Medicine (DDM), MDH in cooperation with the Manila Central University, College of Dentistry. Residents were pre-screened and briefed before the said activity. A total of 50 patients benefited from the free dental extraction while others were given tips on the proper way to brush their teeth. Photo shows, from the left: Dr. Conrado Lucero assisting Dr. Ronnie Vergara while the latter is performing a tooth extraction on a patient. Both doctors are consultants at MDH.

ProductFILES

Gear up for summer with Jollibee and Batman

WHAT BETTER WAY TO CELEBRATE THIS SUNshiny season than to hit the beach or the nearest resorts and just soak in the summer sun. Better yet, ask your favorite Caped Crusader to tag along and make sure that this summer will be super exciting and extra adventurous for the little ones with Jollibee Kids Meal's latest offering – Batman Aqua-Gear. Collect all five fun-packed water gadgets that will allow kids to take Batman's high-flying adventures under the waters. There's the Batman Goggles, Batman Snorkel, Inflat-a-Bands, Power Paddles and Jet-Fins. With Jollibee and Batman, there really are more ways than one to kick back, relax and have good old fun. The Jolli Kiddie Meal Batman Aqua-Gear will only be available until April 27 so don't miss it.

NORTHRAIL

North Luzon Railways Corporation

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

PROJECT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT TEAM AND ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE NORTHRAIL PROJECT, SECTION 1, PHASE 1

The North Luzon Railways Corporation (NorthRail) has received financing from the Export-Import Bank of China for the construction of Section 1, Phase 1 (Caloocan-Malolos Section) of the Northrail Project to supplement the technical capabilities of NorthRail personnel, NorthRail shall engage the services of a qualified consulting company to serve as Project Management Support Team (PMST) which shall arrange the loan that would finance the cost of the bid amount of the consultancy services. The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of the consultancy services is **US DOLLARS: EIGHT MILLION FIVE HUNDRED FORTY TWO THOUSAND (US$ 8,542,000.00)**. Bids in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening of the financial proposal.

NorthRail, herewith calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from interested bidders, which have the capability to arrange a loan that would finance their bid should they be successful, for eligibility and short listing for the PMST services.

Interested consulting companies shall submit their LOI's on or before 24 April 2006, 9:00 a.m to 5:00 p.m. addressed to: **The Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), North Luzon Railway Corporation 2nd Floor, Old Officers Clubhouse, JUSMAG Area, Philippine Army Recreation area, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila** and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php 20,000.00).

Applications for eligibility shall be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The deadline for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on May 8, 2006 at 11:00 o'clock in the morning at the NorthRail office address stated above. Opening of Eligibility Documents will be at 2:00 p.m. of the same date.

The BAC shall draw up the short list of consultants from those who have submitted *LOIs* and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A). The rating system for short listing shall be provided in the Eligibility Documents. The criteria for short listing shall be the following:

a. Applicable experience of the consultant and associates in case of joint ventures, considering both the overall experiences of the firm and the individual experiences of the principal and key staff including the times when employed by other consultants;
b. Qualification of personnel who may be assigned to the job vis-a-vis extent and complexity of the undertaking; and
c. Current workload relative to capacity.

Bidding shall be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR of RA 9184 and bids shall be evaluated using Quality-Cost Based Evaluation/Selection (QCBE/S) procedure.

Interested consultants may obtain further information from NORTHRAIL at the office address stated above with Tel. Nos. 8944184 and 8944187 during office hours from 8:00 am to 5.00 pm.

NORTHRAIL reserves the right to reject any or all bids, declare the bidding of failure or waive any required formality therein and make an award to the bidder whose bid is deemed most advantageous to NORTHRAIL.

(Sgd.) **BENJAMIN L. PALOMIQUE, JR.**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)

(PDI—April 8, 2006)

Bits Clips

Panay News celebrates 25th anniversary

PANAY NEWS, ONE OF THE OLDEST REGIONAL DAILY newspaper based in Iloilo City and circulating in the Visayas will celebrate its silver anniversary today. The occasion will be held at Sarabia Hotel and Convention Center, Iloilo City at 8 p.m. with President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo as guest speaker. About 300 people, composed of Panay News employees, as well as various sectors of society are expected to attend. The event will be covered live by radio and TV stations. According to lawyer Ade Fajardo, president of the company, the occasion will also honor and give awards to prominent outstanding citizens of Western Visayas, the paper's outstanding employees, valued advertisers and supporters for 25 years.

Open house at Versailles in Alabang

VERSAILLES, A FIRST-CLASS SUBDIVISION DEVELOPED BY STATE PROperties Corp (SPC) and located adjacent to Ayala Alabang Village, ushers in summer with a grand open house today, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. To add excitement to this summer event, special gift items will be given to guests and clients who make on-the-spots reservations. Everyone is invited to join in this special day of activities and get a glimpse of the magnificence of the world-famous Versailles right here in the Philippines.

Vemma product launch

AIGS MARKETING CORP, THE PHILIPPINES' EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTOR OF the Vemma product line and its nutritional wellness program, will have a product launch at the Legend Villas Hotel today. For free membership, interested parties may visit www.myvemma.com/aigsmc to view its full video product presentation, and click on "Join Vemma Now". Free VCDs on Vemma products are available at the AIGS Marketing Corp head office: Suite 1408 Jollibee Plaza Building , Emerald Avenue , Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Phone numbers: 687-3016, 687-3018, 0918-7931863.

Join the C2 Chill-Out Experience

C2 COOL & CLEAN GREEN TEA GIVES VACATIONERS IN BORACAY MORE ways to enjoy their beach getaway. From April 13 to 16, visit the C2 Chill-out booth at Club Paraw (Station 1) and every purchase of a bottle of C2 Green Tea entitles you to join the pick-a-prize game. Get a chance to win fabulous treats like the Mandala Spa's signature massage, a henna tattoo or a hand massage. Other exciting prizes like exclusive C2 beach bags, bottle holders, sun visors, and pouches will also be given away. C2 will also host a chill-out party at Club Paraw on Friday, April 14, with cool sounds from Coachlab Music. The sizzling island summer just got way cooler with C2's refreshing vibe!

Marian Pilgrimage Group to Europe

REV. FR. OLEGARIO COMMELERAN, OSB., A SPANISH BENEDICTINE PRIEST and monk is leading a Marian Pilgrimage Group to Europe. Born in Barcelona, Spain, Fr. Ole, as he is fondly known in San Beda, is well acquainted with European culture and would sit well with the group as its chaplain. From May 30 to June 16, the group will visit holy and interesting places in Portugal, France and Italy, such as Fatima, Madrid, Lourdes, Rome and many other places. Those interested to join may contact the following: Alice at 829-0537, 829-9600 or 0927-5542951; Eder at 829-4527 or 0916-3400504.

'Wild Green Summer' from Island Caravan

ISLAND CARAVAN, SKOAL ADVERTISING INC'S BRAND OF TOUR PROGRAMS that explore the whole archipelago, is going to have an Environmental Summer Camps Program this summer for students ages 16 to 21, entitled "Wild Green Summer". A few hours away from Manila, in Sorsogon, Agusan del Norte and Pangasinan, the programs will be facilitated by local officials from the DENR and other resource persons. The students will be exposed to the natural beauty of the environment, learn how to appreciate its importance and rediscover its effects on them and vice-versa. Along with this, they will have activities such as trekking, rappelling, kayaking as well as reforestation in some areas, seeding of the lake and even beach clean-ups. These environmental summer camps are also in cooperation with the local government units, the Department of Tourism and local NGOs involved in environmental preservation. For inquiries, call Island Caravan at 896-1910 or 896-7569 or e-mail at skoal@skyinet.net.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6401 * (632) 920-6446
E-mail: sssemail@info.com.ph * Website http://www.sss.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

TWO-YEAR JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR

LOT 1 - SSS Main Office, Members Assistance Center, Motorpool and Bagbag Records Center
LOT 2 - SSS Makati Building
LOT 3 - SSS NCR Branch Offices

The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM is requesting for proposals for the hiring of janitorial services to keep and maintain the cleanliness, sanitation and good housekeeping of SSS Buildings and leased offices including basic pest management and landscape maintenance.

1. The ***SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM***, through the Budget for Maintenance/Repairs - Building (Janitorial Services) intends to apply the sum of P67.174 Million, being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Two-Year Janitorial Services for Lot Nos. 1, 2 and 3. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

Lot No.	Area Description	ABC
Lot 1	SSS Main Office, Members Assistance Center, Motorpool and Bagbag Records Center	P 39.566 M
Lot 2	SSS Makati Building	P 6.782 M
Lot 3	SSS NCR Branch Offices	P 20.826 M

2. The ***SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM*** now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for Two-Year Janitorial Services. Delivery of the SERVICES shall start on the day specified in the Notice to Proceed. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB).
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the ***SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM*** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount as follows

Lot No.	Approved Budget for the Contract	Cost of Bidding Documents
1	P 39.566 M	P 20,000.00
2	P 6.782 M	P 5,000.00
3	P 20.826 M	P 20,000.00

If the bidder opted to participate in more than one lot, the bidder shall pay corresponding to the total cost of the bidding documents for all the lots it intended to participate.

The method of payment will be on a cash basis payable at the SSS Cashiering Department, SSS Main Bldg. Ground Floor, upon accomplishment of SSS Form R-6. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

6. The ***SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM*** will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **April 24, 2006 at 2:00 p.m.** at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Building on **May 19, 2006 not later than 2:00 p.m.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in a form and amount indicated in the Bid Tender Documents. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on **May 19, 2006 at 2:00 p.m.** at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the given address.
9. The ***SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM*** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bid and Awards Committee
The Secretariat
6th Floor, SSS Main Building
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. 922-2091, 924-7380, 920-6401 local 5491
Email: bac@sss.gov.ph
Facsimile number (02) 924-7380

(Sgd.) THE CHAIRMAN
Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI - April 8, 2006)

BMW PHILS, PHILAM INSURANCE INK CONTRACT

BMW Philippines introduces BMW Premium Motor Insurance, a product underwritten by Philam Insurance (a member of the American International Group) exclusively for buyers and owners of brand new and certified pre-owned BMW vehicles. Present at the contract signing between BMW Philippines and Philam Insurance are: (seated from left) Ernesto Valencia, EVP and COO, Philam Insurance; Anton Du Plessis, president and CEO - Philam Insurance; Dr. Joerg Breuer, president - BMW Philippines; and David Blue, treasurer and finance director - BMW Philippines. Witnessing the event are: (standing from left) Hoe Shin Koh, vice president, personal lines - Philam Insurance; Glenn Navea, assistant vice president, personal lines - Philam Insurance; and Lito German, marketing and corporate communications director - BMW Philippines.

Twins give Anabelle a headache

NOT IN REAL LIFE but in Advil's new TV commercial. The latest Advil effort features Anaballe Rama and her twin sons, Richard and Raymond Gutierrez. This project is actually a venture of firsts: this is the first ever TV ad Anabelle appears in while it's the first time in more than a decade that the twin brothers get together for a commercial. The last one they did was way back when they were toddlers. And, this is the first endeavor of Advil with celebrities as endorsers.

The mother and sons tandem drives home Advil's positioning as the analgesic for modern pain. Unlike during their parents' time, the younger set leads a more hectic and stressful lifestyle these days. This is compounded by the advent of high-technology that dictates a way of life eons away from that of the older generation. The kind of headaches the youth suffer from is the result of this very frenzied way of life. That's why the analgesic popular to their parents' generation may not exactly be the right pain reliever for them now.

This ad with Anabelle and her sons is the latest installment in the More Powerful than Pain campaign of Advil from Wyeth Consumer Healthcare and its advertising agency, Agency of the Year TBWA\Santiago Mangada Puno.

Department of Energy, Manila, Philippines

Project ACCESS – Accelerating Community Electricity Services using Solar

The Government of the Philippines through its Department of Energy (DOE) has embarked on a number of comprehensive and innovative measures towards achieving the goal of 100% barangay (village) electrification by 2008 and 90% household electrification by 2017. These measures include new approaches for the implementation of electrification projects in order to enhance sustainability, increase focus on public-private partnerships, use innovative financing and subsidy schemes, and encourage local participation and ownership

The DOE in partnership with the MIRANT Foundation and with support from the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) announces the launch of ***Project ACCESS****. This project in its first phase beginning April 2006, will result in providing electricity services for public facilities, households and other establishments using solar photovoltaics (PV) to benefit people in 55 barangays in remote areas in the Provinces of Aklan, Iligan, Masbate, Northern Samar and Palawan.*

The DOE is implementing the World Bank and Global Environment Facility-supported Rural Power Project (RPP) of which Project ACCESS, using a Sustainable Solar Market Package (SSMP) approach, is one component. The DOE is pleased to partner with MIRANT Foundation in the first phase of Project ACCESS.

The SSMP concept recognizes that in order to provide solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity services to remote rural communities in a commercially viable way, the scale of the business operation must be sufficiently large to overcome the higher transactions costs of doing business in remote areas, and risks must be manageable. A key feature of this SSMP approach is its strong focus on ensuring the long term sustainable operation of these power systems through the provision of after-sales and warranty services and support to further expanding services to households and other establishments through continued marketing and sales.

The SSMP approach achieves this goal by offering to a private sector or non-governmental entity the contractual right to provide solar PV electricity services for a market package that comprises a cluster of contiguous barangays. Public sector and donor resources will fund PV systems for public facilities that will benefit the whole community. These include barangay halls, schools, health clinics, streetlights, and the like. Under the contract, the SSMP contractor has the obligation to install the PV systems for public facilities within six months and warrant their operation for a period of five years.

The contractor is also obligated to market and sell on a commercial basis, solar PV systems to benefit at least 25 percent of households in each SSMP cluster within 18 months from contract signing. To support commercial sales to these households and establisments, significant subsidy and financial assistance is provided. These include an output-based subsidy from the government of P4000-8000 (about $80-160) per PV system, and output-based GEF financial incentive of $1.50-2.50/Wp, depending on the size of the PV system. Access to financing through micro-finance institutions is also available through a credit line that has been established at the Development Bank of the Philippines.

The SSMP contractor may also obtain additional grant assistance of up to $10,000 per year under the RPP Market Development Support Facility. This facility provides grants of up to 50 percent to cover the incremental cost of training and technical assistance to improve financial and business management; develop sales and after-sales service networks; product development and quality assurance; marketing and business development; among others.

Over the next three months, Project ACCESS will invite bids to award contracts for five SSMP Market Packages in the provinces of Aklan, Iligan, Masbate, Northern Samar and Palawan. Each package comprises of 2 to 16 barangays for a total of 55 barangays. The Market Packages will result in installation of PV systems in nearly 180 public facilities and about 3,700 PV systems for households and other establishments. The aggregate PV power requirements for the public facilities are expected to be about 56 kWp with each facility requiring 75 to 440 Wp of power. Power for households and other establishments may require more than 70 kWp in aggregate. Beyond the first phase of Project ACCESS, under the Expanded Rural Electrification Program of the Government, additional SSMP packages will be awarded later in 2006 and early 2007.

Interested suppliers of PV components and systems, prospective bidders for the SSMP contracts, and other requiring more information on Project ACCESS and the forthcoming invitations to bid, please contact:

The Project Management Office
Rural Power Project
Energy Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Telephone Numbers: (632) 840-2252 or (632) 8401401 local 240
Fax Numbers: (632) 8402120 or (632) 840-5593
Email Address: mycaps@doe.gov.ph; gzamudio@doe.gov.ph

Attention: Ms. Mylene C. Capongcol, Project Director
Mr. Gabriel S. Zamudio, Jr. PV Manager

(PDI—April 8, 2006)

Gov't may revise fiscal program

Increasing spending for pump-priming

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO REvise its medium-term fiscal program to allow a two-year delay in the attainment of its goal to post a budget surplus beginning 2009.

This is aimed at freeing up more funds for economic pump-priming.

In his recommendation to the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee last Monday, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the target should be to maintain a balanced budget from 2008 to 2010 to allow higher spending for pump-priming.

The original plan was to wipe out the budget deficit by 2008 and post surpluses of P12.1 billion (0.1 percent of GDP) in 2009 and P17 billion (0.2 percent of GDP) surplus in 2010.

Based on the DBCC's latest forecast, government debt as a percentage of GDP would slow down in the medium term from 72 percent in 2005 to 68 percent this year. This, it said, would further decline to 43 percent in 2010.

Instead of tightening its belt too much to post a surplus starting 2009, Teves said there should be a leeway for increased spending for priority sectors.

"The committee agreed to use existing fiscal figures up to 2008 and revise those for 2009 and 2010 as proposed by Sec. Teves," a source said.

The government, however, will stick to its commitment to balance the budget by 2008, in line with the front-loading of fiscal reforms.

Agost Benard, associate director for sovereign ratings at global rating firm Standard & Poor's, said in a recent forum that a balanced budget was not even a prerequisite for a ratings upgrade.

"What's important is the capacity to generate more revenues, to reduce your outstanding debt stock and at the same time increase spending for infrastructure and education in order to increase future growth prospects," Benard said.

Lepanto posts ₱409M in losses due to labor woes

By Christine A. Gaylican

LEPANTO CONSOLIDATED MINING CO. INC. said that a four-month labor dispute in the company dragged its financial performance in 2005, ending the year with a net loss of P409.53 million.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Lepanto said its gold and silver sales last year dropped to P1.4 billion from P2.25 billion, as mineral production dropped due to the workers' strike from June to September.

The company said minerals milled decreased by 40 percent to 471,710 tons in 2005 from 784,720 tons in 2004. Its ore extraction rate averaged at 1,667 tons per day last year, which was 24 percent lower than the 2004 level.

Lepanto said it was forced to reduce gold production by 42 percent and was unable to take advantage of the 10 percent increase in gold prices. This resulted in a 38-percent drop in gross revenue to P852 million from P2.25 billion in 2004.

Its operating income plunged 186 percent to negative P304 million in 2005 from P352 million in the previous year.

The company reported a retrenchment cost of P51 million and P114 million in impairment losses, which formed part of its total cost in 2005.

Lepanto, which began mining operations in 1936, was a major copper producer until it shut down its operations in 1997. It then shifted to gold production through its Victoria Project. It now operates two mines—the Victoria and the Teresa—both in Mankayan, Benguet.

The company also runs three wholly-owned subsidiaries—Shipside Inc., Diamond Drilling Corp. and Lepanto Investment and Development Corp. Through LIDC, Lepanto owns 80 percent of Diamant Board Philippines Inc. and 60 percent of Far Southeast Gold Resources Inc.

Ford launches flex-fuel engines

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FORD MOTOR CO. PHILIPPINES URGED THE government to adopt policies that would encourage local sugar producers and car makers to develop vehicles that run on cleaner fuels.

Henry Co., Ford Philippines Group president, said: "We have made the cars, now give us the fuel that will enable us all to harvest the benefits."

Co said this at the launch of Ford's new line of sedans equipped with engines that can run on either pure gasoline or a gasoline blend with as much as 20-percent ethanol.

The official explained that ethanol is an alcohol fuel made from sugar and starches found in plants like sugarcane, cassava, corn and potatoes.

"Imagine the development that ethanol production can bring about in the provinces that produce these crops," Co said.

He said using ethanol could reduce the country's dependence on foreign oil, ensure energy security, help improve the balance of trade, and create more economic activity in the countryside.

Last December, Ford announced it was infusing $20 million to enable its Sta. Rosa plant become the first flexible fuel engine factory in the region.

The Sta. Rosa facility is expected produce 100,000 units of flex-fuel engines valued at about $100 million over the next five years.

In a statement, Energy Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla lauded Ford Philippines "for promptly responding to the government's alternative transport fuels program."

Lotilla said he anticipated that other car manufacturers would follow suit in order to achieve the wider use of bio-fuels for transport.

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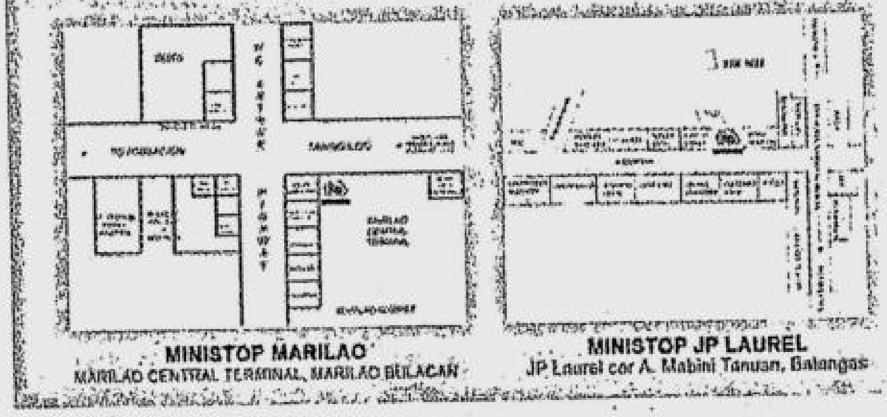
AREAS OPEN FOR BUSINESS



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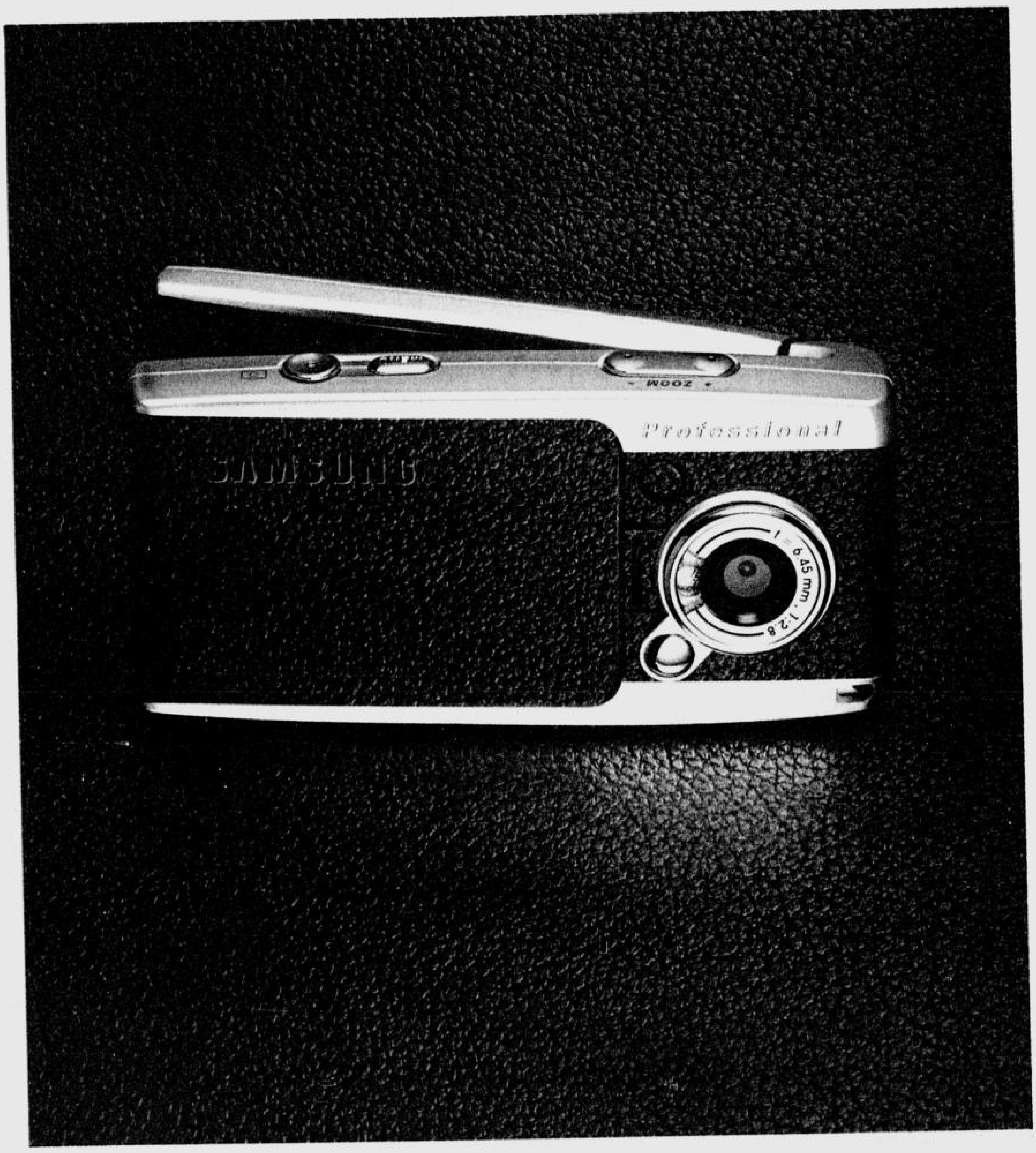

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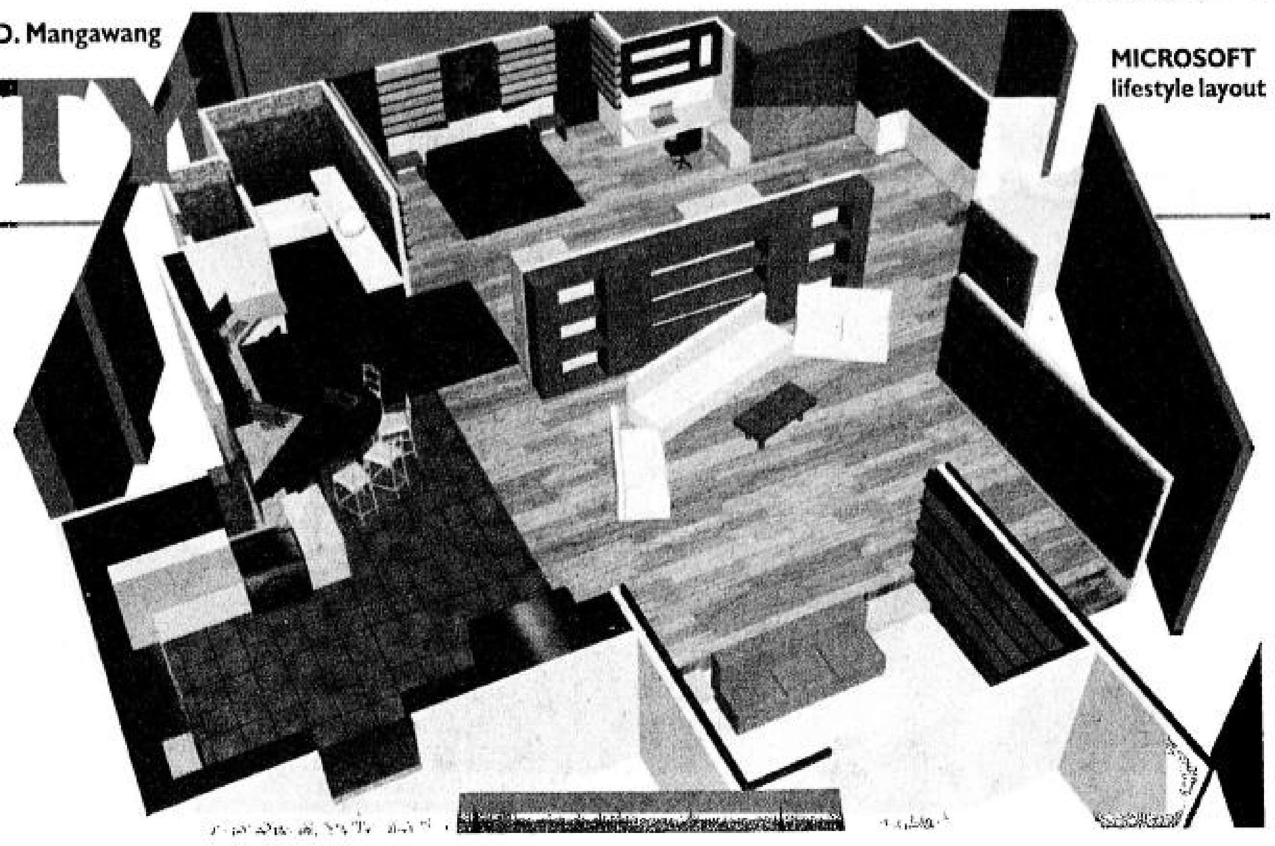
Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

PROPERTY



MICROSOFT lifestyle layout

Smart home finds its way to RP

By Tessa R.Salazar

IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF time. When the West developed the Internet and wireless technology, and somehow integrated it into the home, there would be no doubt that this nifty magic of electronics would eventually migrate south and east to the tropics. And now, finally, the "smart home" is here.

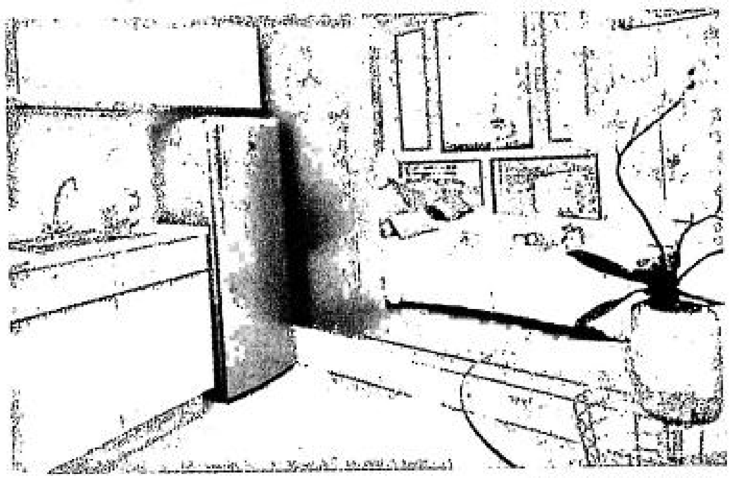
A 150-square-meter simulation of the "Filipino home of the future," complete with an Internet-controlled refrigerator that could read barcodes for expiry dates, an Internet-

SMART/B2-5

MEZZA RESIDENCES: GET A TASTE OF THE GOOD LIFE

From the country's most respected names in retailing and mall development comes a project that's soon to be a by-word in condominium living—the Mezza Residences.

Situated at Aurora Boulevard corner Araneta and Guirayan Streets in the heart of Quezon City, the impressive Mezza Residences has four 38-storey residential towers. Offering one-bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom, and suite units with introductory prices ranging from one to five million, Mezza Residences is suited for young professionals yearning for their first taste of independence or starting-out families seeking a place to call home.



1-Bedroom Unit

"Mezza Residences is metropolis living at its most convenient," shares Julie Jalandoni, Assistant Vice President for Sales and Marketing of SM Development Corporation (SMDC). "Everything one can ever need is right here, thus saving on gas, energy, and precious time. We really had the lifestyle of today's urbanites in mind in developing this project – addressing as many of their living requirements."

Each tower has three high-speed elevators and ample parking. There is a main lobby in each tower and a welcome lobby on each floor as well. An individual laundry drying area for each unit and a centralized garbage collection and disposal system are provided for added convenience.

Supported by the SM Group of Companies and Banco de Oro, Mezza Residences allows you to enjoy a wide variety of activities all under one roof. Cafes, service, and retail establishments are conveniently located at the podium at the ground and second level.

"Everyone can go home and do all their shopping right here. Young urbanites can dine out and have a good time with their friends," adds Jalandoni. "Mezza truly finds its hallmark on convenience. But more than just that, SMDC puts this together in a great package with well-planned floor areas and generous open spaces."

Mezza Residences takes pride in its lush greens. Unique to this project is its sprawling 1,000 square meter lawn—an inviting place where families can have a picnic, play catch with the kids,or take an afternoon nap.

3-Bedroom Unit

Giving importance to healthy living, a Zen-inspired garden with a meditation area and a reflexology path relaxes the mind and spirit of the weariest urban dweller. Kids can soak up the sun in the kiddie pool while adults can stay fit by swimming in the 25-meter lap pool.

Here at Mezza Residences, it's all about living the city life to the fullest.

It is a short distance away from the Central Colleges of the Philippines, the Immaculate Heart of Mary College, the UERM Hospital, the UERM Memorial Medical Center, the LRT 2 Sta. Mesa Station, and the bustling Araneta area. Everything indeed is within your reach. The Mezza Residences is a project of the SMDC. For inquiries, call 831-51-51 or 0918-888-1203. Log on to the SMDC website at www.smdevelopment.com. Model units are available for viewing at the SM City Sta. Mesa.

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mezza
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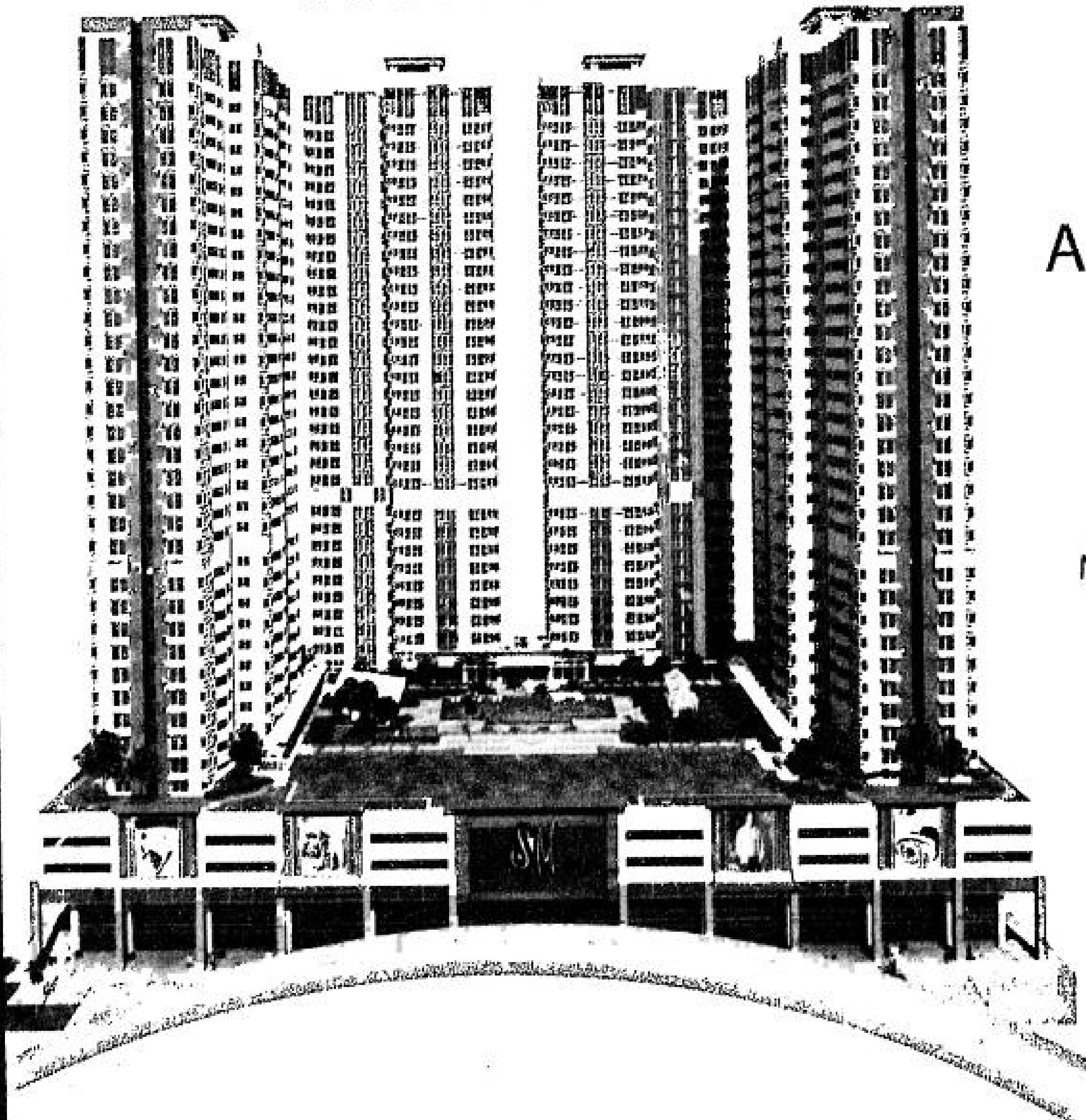

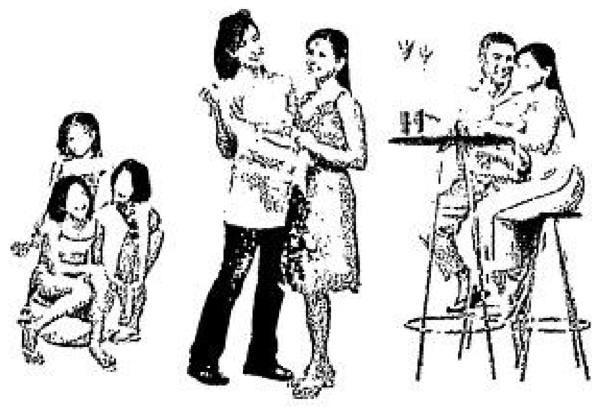

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Healthwalk and cabanas dotting the gardens
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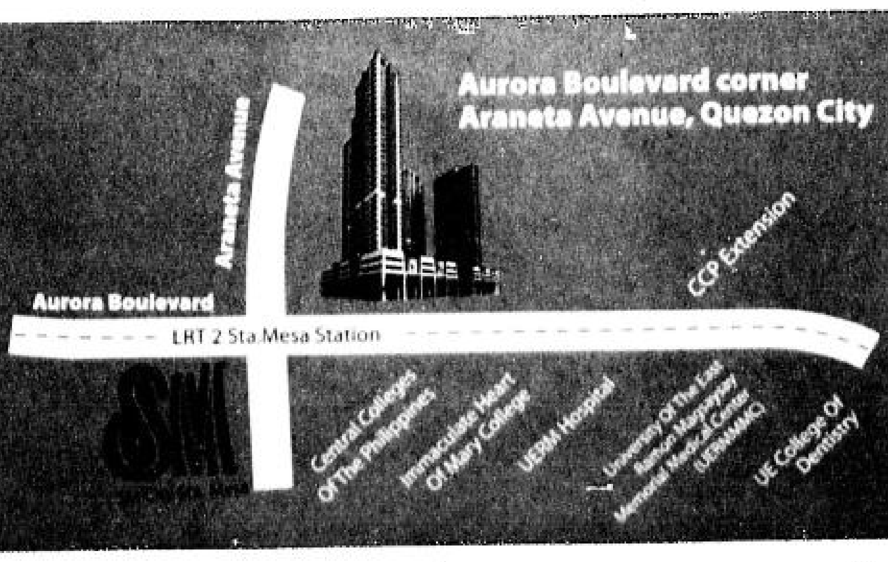
Aurora Boulevard corner
Araneta Avenue, Quezon City
Araneta Avenue
Aurora Boulevard
LRT 2 Sta.Mesa Station
CCP Extension
Central Colleges Of The Philippines
Immaculate Heart Of Mary College
UERM Hospital
University Of The East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center (UERMMMC)
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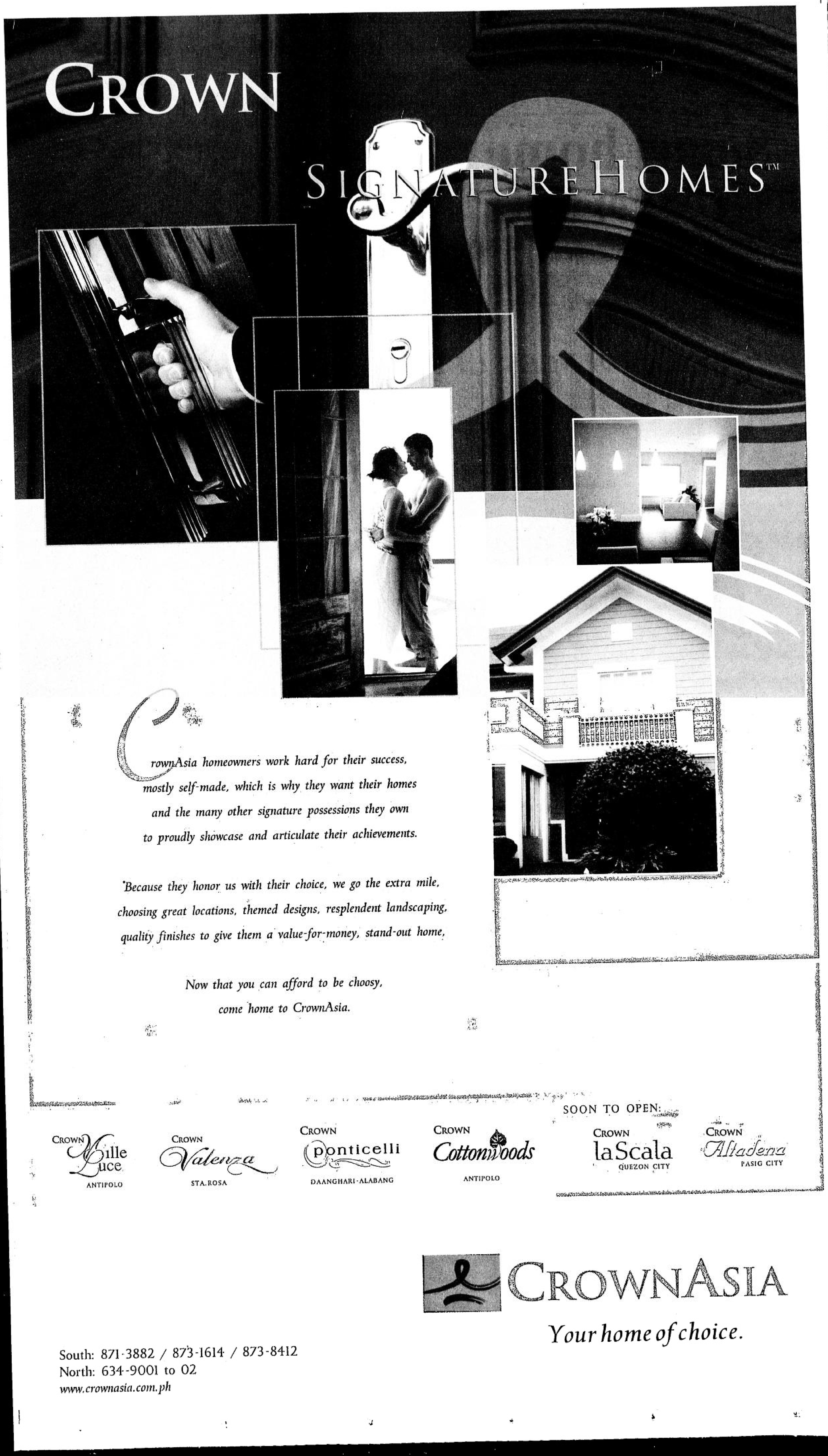

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CrownAsia elegantly signs a new name across the blue skies of Sta. Rosa

Hundreds of genius hours are spent before CrownAsia proclaims a new site as a "signature project." Such is the case with Valenza, Sta. Rosa.

Significant intercity locations. CrownAsia homeowners are self-made success stories. They need to live, work and play near business and productivity centers. Sta. Rosa is exactly this. Major world names in industry are positioned for their regional production, spawning a new town of technical and managerial stars.

Paseo
de Santa Rosa

Outstanding site development themes. CrownAsia signature homes lean heavily on Italian elan to distinguish each project look from all others around the area.

Value-for-money technical excellence. The consultants, architects and engineers of CrownAsia labor to put more sense and save cents in each aspect of development. Space-saving features, practical technical specs allow CrownAsia to plow back savings into making signature projects outpace competition.

Sta. Rosa. The new boomtown of the upwardly mobile self-made success stories.

It's Southward Ho! New creative business minds are making the move away from the traditional Metro Manila central business districts to Sta. Rosa. With eyes set on enterprise opportunities in the growing population of Sta. Rosa and the increasing visitor critical mass of Tagaytay, the population of young investor entrepreneurs is steadily increasing. Valenza will provide the perfect home for this bright-eyed class of aggressive achievers.

CrownAsia Signature Homes are stand outs, wherever the new silk flags fly to herald a new project.

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There is only one village that stands out so proudly in boomtown Sta. Rosa. Valenza. As only fitting for a stand out, Valenza's architectural trademarks are classic cupolas, domes, and stunning landscaping.

Valenza is beautifully nestled in between cool Tagaytay and the blossoming town of Sta. Rosa. Shopping, entertainment and dining are only 5 minutes away from its gates. Alabang, a quick zip down the SLEX.

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Lead poisoning in your home

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amado de Jesus

LEAD POISONING IS ONE OF THE MOST common and preventable public health problems among young children. Many are now aware that even small amounts of lead can have disastrous effects.

There is no safe blood lead level. Chronic exposure to high levels of lead can cause brain damage, affect a child's growth, damage kidneys, impair hearing, as well as cause vomiting and headaches. It can cause learning and behavioral problems for children. In adults, lead can increase blood pressure and can cause digestive problems, nerve disorders, sleep problems and mood changes.

Fetuses, infants and children are more vulnerable to lead exposure than adults since lead is more easily absorbed into growing bodies. Another reason is that small children are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead. This is especially the case with children from infancy to six years of age because their brains and nervous system are not yet fully developed.

Children who are lead toxic may have no outward appearance of illness. A child's behavior may be the only indication that he or she is accumulating toxic amounts of lead. There are now recorded cases where a child's unruly behavior like bullying and poor performance in school are directly linked to high lead exposure. Lead toxic children are normally identified as being "difficult to manage."

Studies with children show a seven times higher chance of dropping out of high school with lead exposure in early childhood and a higher rate of delinquent behavior in later adolescence.

Lead is a sweet-tasting highly toxic metal that produces various damaging effects on health especially young children.

Exposure to lead

The major cause of lead poisoning is deteriorating lead-based paint and the interior and exterior dust caused by such paint. Other sources could be air, drinking water, food and contaminated soil. Airborne lead enters the body when you breathe or swallow lead particles or dust once it has settled. Lead can leach into drinking water from certain types of plumbing materials, such as lead pipes, copper pipes with lead solder and brass faucets.

It can also be found on walls, woodwork and the exterior of homes in the form of lead-based paint. Lead can be deposited on floors, windowsills, eating and playing surfaces, or in the soil outside the home.

Most homes built before 1940 and half of homes built from 1940 to 1960 contain lead-based paint. Lead paint was banned from residential use in 1978. As a rule, the older the house, the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint and a higher concentration of lead in the paint.

Past emissions of leaded gasoline now account for the high level of lead found in soil. This is why it is unsafe for children to play in the dirt or in dusty areas, even indoors. They then put their fingers, clothes, or toys in their mouths, or if they eat without first washing their hands.

What steps are being done?

For starters, the United States is spending $147 million to address the problem of lead exposure from housing sources. They have established a system that considers the health of occupants and the physical condition of houses. They require blood lead screenings done on children especially in high-risk areas that are determined by the age of the housing, the number of poor families and the prevalence of children previously found to have elevated blood lead levels.

Certified lead inspectors and accredited lead removal contractors are helping many people in both poor and affluent sectors of their communities.

Canada is following suit. They are now fully aware of the problem and are actively enacting laws to address the problem of lead exposure.

What RP is doing

What problem? In two words, this is what summarizes the state of affairs regarding our level of awareness about lead poisoning.

Our lawmakers can do a lot to help the people. Unfortunately, they are occupied with much more "urgent matters." Admittedly, the campaign is not going to be easy, as our western counterparts are finding out. But it has to start soon, otherwise the problem could get worse.

What you can do

If your home was built before 1978, chances are it contains lead-based paint. If you had a child under age six who may have been exposed to it, he or she should have a blood lead test. In children any blood lead level greater than 10 micrograms per deciliter is considered elevated blood lead level; for adults it is any blood lead level greater than 25 (μg/dl).

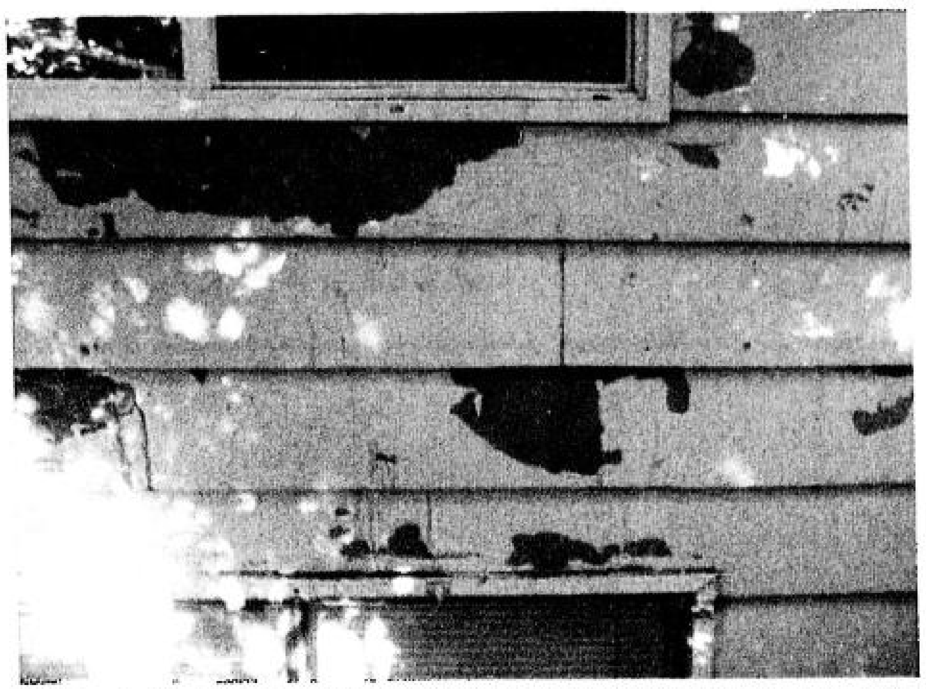
Some even encourage the use of hair elemental analysis as an adjunct to blood screening in detecting chronic exposure to metals such as lead and mercury.

Check your house for peeling and chipping paint. Clean it up and prevent your children from touching those areas. Cover these areas with contact paper and block them off with furniture. Cover old carpets. They can be full of lead dust. Let your children play elsewhere.

When cleaning, wet mop floors at least twice a week. Add detergent to the wash water and rinse. Wash window sills weekly. Do not rinse used paper towels. Just throw them away. The window sill is the part of the house that is normally in direct contact with young children. Some of them even chew on the paint found in window sills.

Put a washable floor mat outside your front and back service doors. Wash them weekly.

To prevent lead dust from getting to your child's mouth, wash his or her hands before eating. It also helps to keep your child's fingernails clean and trimmed.



LEAD poisoning in homes is caused mainly by deteriorating lead-based paint and the dust inside and outside homes caused by such paint. Young children from infancy to age 6 are particularly vulnerable to lead poisoning, especially when they chew on the paint on window sills and other parts of the house. WWW.HOMEPROHOUSE.COM

It is also important to stress the need to make sure that the children are fed nutritious food. Lead latches on to children's bones, like nutrient such as calcium. Experts agree that poisoning is more severe when a child's diet is poor.

Check for lead-based paint

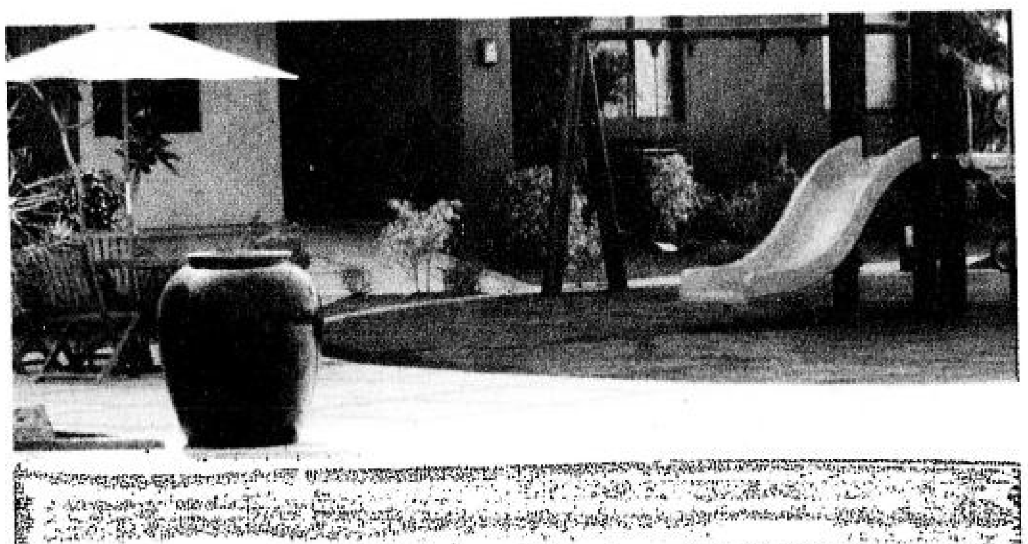
In the United States there are certified lead inspectors and do-it-yourself test kits that are available. In this country since we do not have inspectors and test kits it is still possible to check our homes. An individual concerned about a specific area in a home can take a simple paint chip, dust or soil sample and bring or mail the sample directly to a certified laboratory and have it analyzed. Since a house may contain several layers of paint from different periods it may be necessary to get several samples so as to make a good representation of the entire house.

Next time your child becomes unruly and difficult to manage, don't blame it on his genes or his nutrition, he just might be suffering from toxic lead poisoning.

Fulfill your civic duty

The Philippine Business for the Environment (PBE) and their partners would like to encourage recycling by industry, organizations and individuals in their annual Recyclables Collection Events (RCE) from April 18 to 26, during Earth Week. These events facilitate both corporate economic development and corporate responsibility through recycling. Recycling diverts a large amount of still useful materials from the landfill that can be redeemed for cash. Over the past four years, the RCE events have steadily grown to include many businesses and members of the community.

This year's RCEs will be held between April 18 and 26. It will redeem recyclables such as used paper, used ink and toner cartridges, junk electronics and electrical equipment, used tires, used batteries, used motor oil, PET plastic bottles, aluminum cans. To inquire further about the RCE events, please call PBE at 635-3670, 635-2650 to 51, fax 631-5714, e-mail ctem@csi.com.ph, or visit its website at www.pbe.org.ph. *For comments or inquiries, e-mail amadodejesus@gmail.com.*



ROSEWOOD Pointe has top of the line amenities and recreational facilities.

Dev't adds business edge to resort amenities and home comfort

DMCI HOMES INTRODUCES ANOTHER take on its pioneering concept of combining the amenities of a resort with the highly improved standard features of a residential community when Rosewood Pointe, an enclave of 12 medium-rise condominium buildings, takes its place in Taguig's continuously evolving landscape.

More than striking a balance between meeting the demands of work and the promised comforts of home, DMCI Homes will be adding a business component to the leisure and home comfort features at Rosewood Pointe.

Residential haven

If the greater part of the community is dedicated to creating a residential haven, a portion of it, however, is reserved to address the occasional need by its prospective homeowners to transact business without delay right on the spot. To answer this particular need, the development's clubhouse is designed with dining halls, an audio-video room, a business center with Wi-fi connectivity and ready facilities for a bistro operation.

When Rosewood Pointe finally rises on a 3.9-hectare property near The Fort, it will assume pride of place as one of the micro-communities of Central Square in Taguig.

Like DMCI Homes' much renowned mid-rise developments—East Ortigas Mansions, Mayfield Residences and Vista de Lago Villas—Rosewood Pointe is expected to attract the same enthusiasm and interest from the middle-income market.

COMBINING the amenities of a resort with the standard features of a residential community

Amenities, facilities

Complete in amenities and recreation facilities, the latest DMCI Homes development will provide such sports and fitness facilities like a basketball/badminton court, swimming pool and a fully equipped gym. There are jogging paths, bicycle lanes and playgrounds amid lush surroundings accentuated by a lily pond, garden fountains and statuaries.

As commonly found in all DMCI Homes projects, Rosewood Pointe will have an atrium and single-loaded corridors for all its 12 condo buildings. Overall, it will carry the architectural character—minimal and clean lines—and the Zen appeal of the much-admired Mayfield Park Residences.

Accessibility

What gives the development a cutting edge is its accessibility. Located at about half a kilometer away from Circumferential Road 5 right across Heritage Park, the property is easily accessible from Bayani Road and Pasong Tamo Extension if you're coming from the Makati business district. But if you're proceeding from Ortigas and Rockwell, C-5 provides the main access road, thus making Rosewood Pointe a haven for professionals working in these areas.

Near and around the property are the best schools the country could offer—The International School, Assumption, Asia Pacific College, Colegio de San Agustin, British School and others. For homeowners with kids, Rosewood Pointe is the perfect place to live in.

The development is introducing end units with a three-bedroom floor plan, an offer carried only by the developer's tandem units, and a balcony where one can snatch another private place for meditation or for privacy. Price is pegged at P3 million. For advance property screening, interested parties may call 888-3333.

The Michelangelo: a grand salute to La Dolce Vita

MAVERICK PROPERTY DEVELOPER Brittany Corp. inspires a renaissance in luxurious living with a masterpiece that redefines what it means to live large.

The Michelangelo serves as a fitting testament to the innovative spirit of Brittany Corp. and its commitment to providing the highest standard of living possible. It belongs to the Masters Collection of the Italian-inspired development Portofino, a masterplanned community on a sprawling area of 300 hectares on the Las Piñas-Cavite-Laguna-Muntinlupa Link Road.

Italian theme

Just like the rest of the Portofino development, the Michelangelo carries the Italian theme but on a grander, more ambitious scale. It has Portofino's signature features such as courtyards, cupolas and balconies, only magnified to fit Michelangelo's structural splendor.

With about 625 square meters of floor area on an 810-sq-m lot, the Michelangelo is a home that exudes grandeur and sophistication rather than flaunts it. The imposing façade of rich terra cotta walls and striking Italianate details is enough to stop a guest at one's tracks.

A heavily carved door made of dark wood opens into a spacious, outer lobby area and offers a clearer view of the home's layout. The house wraps around a large courtyard with a horizontal fountain flowing freely from the back wall to the center of the garden.

Welcoming the guests inside the house is a reception area with textured walls in a glowing golden shade. To the right are glass doors leading to the courtyard while on the opposite side are the stairs leading to the second level. Straight ahead is a grand living room where the homeowner can entertain in style.

The entryway is arched and the two columns that appear to support it were carved from the walls. On the left side is a balcony with ornate wrought-iron details for a more rustic feel. An entryway located at the far left leads to the dining room which can accommodate everything from posh get-togethers to intimate dinners.

Completing the ground level is the kitchen. Beige and black marble countertops run along two sides of the room while about four feet of counter space juts out to the center that can serve as a unique breakfast nook. Additional lighting enters the room through a tower of glass bricks on one corner and an open window just about the faucet. Storage is provided for by wooden shelves with glass doors decorated with ornate Roman-style carvings.

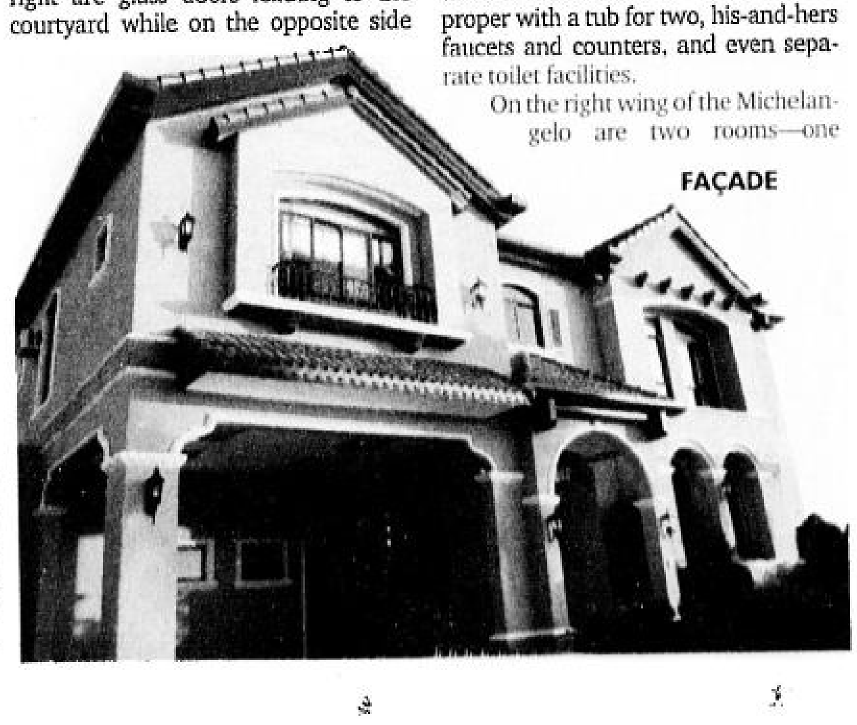
4 bedrooms

The Michelangelo has four bedrooms including the Master Suite, a special space designed specifically with the master and lady of the house in mind. A private reception area is situated between the second level's reception area and the rest of the master suite.

An entryway on the right side of the armoire leads to a large walk-in closet. Again, dark wood with ornate carvings reveal practical storage spaces for his and her clothes.

A white marble top island is set at the center of the room and provides additional storage underneath. The walk-in closet leads to the bathroom proper with a tub for two, his-and-hers faucets and counters, and even separate toilet facilities.

On the right wing of the Michelangelo are two rooms—one above another—that could serve as extra guest rooms or entertainment/game room. Both rooms open up to a view of the courtyard.



FAÇADE

LIVING room

ARCHWAY

"We were not content with just developing The Courtyards. Being a maverick, we always want to push the limit. So we thought, why not? Contrary to what has been said, a lot of people still have money to purchase property. And probably also because with everything going on, property is still the safest investment there is," said Brittany Corp. president Jing Seranno.

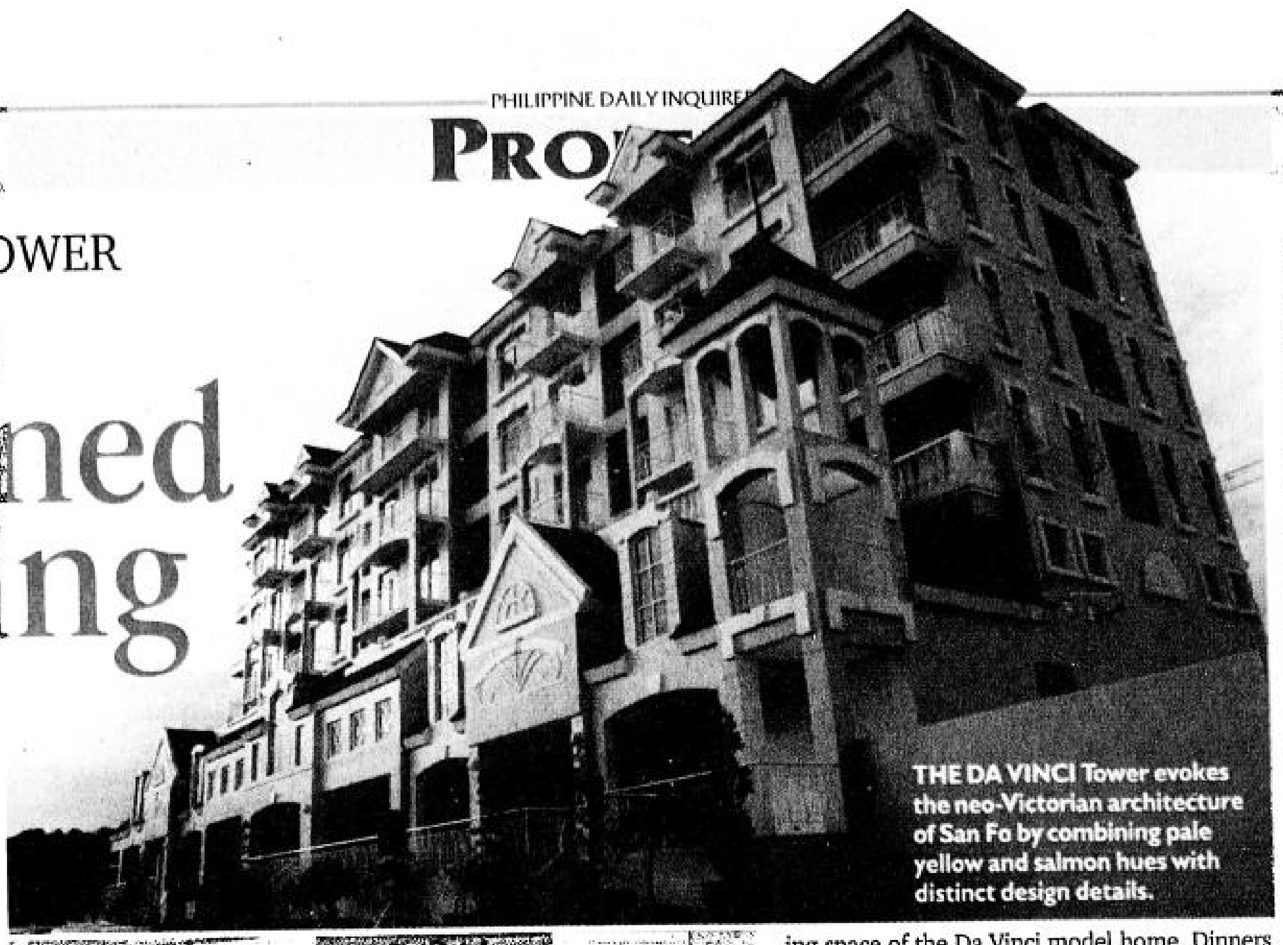
Pioneering development

The Michelangelo of the Master's Collection is a pioneering development conceptualized and designed exclusively by Brittany Corp. The Masters Collection is a unique property within the Portofino development which includes Portofino Heights, Portofino South, the Courtyards of Portofino, Courtyards II, and WideLots of Portofino.

Brittany and its properties remain as a investment of choice in real estate development today. More than just a safe investment, it has developed into a wise choice for homeowners with a vision for the future. For inquiries and property previews, please call 850-2868 or 850-3084.

PRESIDIO'S DA VINCI TOWER

A glimpse of redefined urban living



THE DA VINCI Tower evokes the neo-Victorian architecture of San Fo by combining pale yellow and salmon hues with distinct design details.

INSPIRED BY THE URBANITE'S DREAM OF finding the ideal home, the country's biggest homebuilder, Crown Asia develops its first vertical community reflecting the continuous growth of their career and complementing their fast-paced lifestyle. With the first of the 16 towers of Presidio at Brittany Bay already completed, the unveiling of the Da Vinci Tower model unit grants a glimpse of how Crown Asia redefines urban living.

Crown Asia creates a self-contained multilevel hub by the bay located at the boundary of Sucat and Taguig, as the renowned partnership of Recio+Casas blends classic with contemporary and innovative condominium features. The unique design configuration of Presidio boasts of 16 towers interplaying in height and size to bring a sense of closely knit community while maintaining each resident's privacy.

Encompassing theme

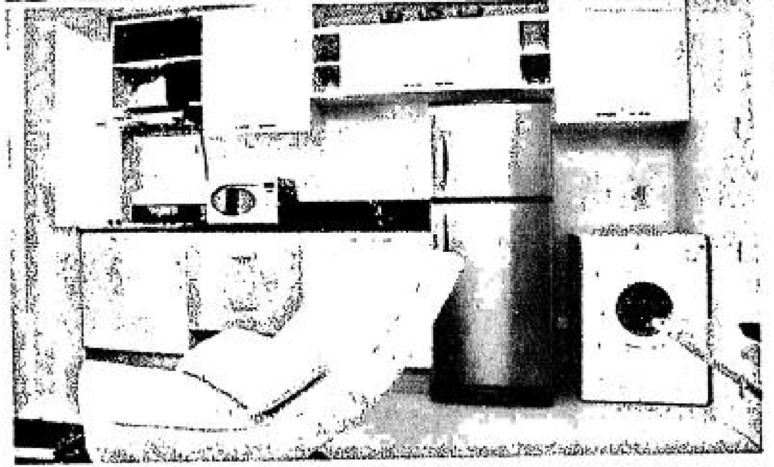
Distinguishing Presidio from other conventional condominiums is an encompassing theme inspired by San Francisco's neo-Victorian architecture evident in each tower as well as in the whole enclave. The exterior of the Da Vinci Tower is a combination of pale yellow and salmon hues while shingled roofs, intricate latticework, gable turrets, balconies and towers complete the San Francisco design style.

A five-story mixed-used (comprised of residential and commercial units) condo, the first floor of Da Vinci will house commercial establishments for the residents' convenience.

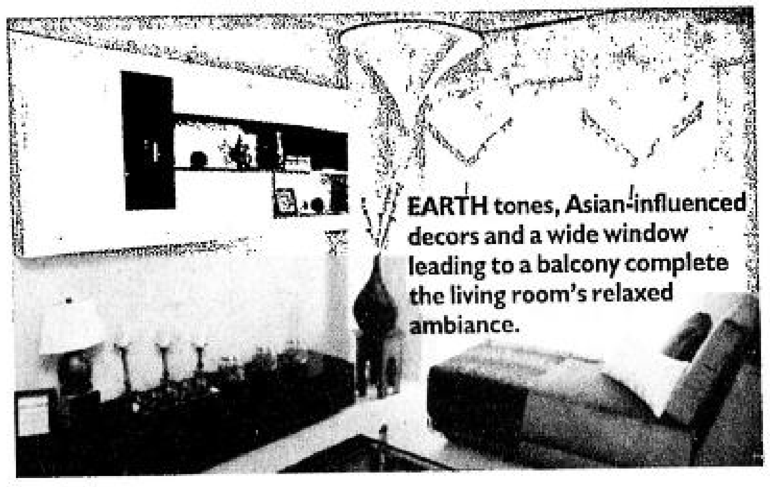
A separate entrance for the residents of Da Vinci is provided to ensure privacy and manned 24-hours a day to ensure the security of residents. Upon entering the condo, a lobby designed with a touch of relaxed elegance by esteemed interior designer Pinky Cruz welcomes you home.

Relaxed ambiance

The Asian-influenced interiors by Pinky Cruz lend a relaxed ambiance with a feel of flowing space throughout the two-bedroom 56-sq-m living space of the Da Vinci model home. Dinners and get-togethers are made more pleasurable since the dining and living rooms face a wide window that opens to a balcony. A spacious kitchen is also available whenever you want to make a home-cooked meal for your family.



A BEAUTIFUL yet functional kitchen for preparing home-cooked meals with the whole family.



EARTH tones, Asian-influenced decors and a wide window leading to a balcony complete the living room's relaxed ambiance.

The child's bedroom is a cheerful retreat from a day at school or an afternoon of play around the neighborhood of Presidio. While rejuvenating in the master's bedroom, one only needs to step out onto the adjacent balcony for a glimpse of the bay. Though designed to please the eye, the architecture of each area is also built for function and comfort, keeping in mind that every space is very valuable in condo living.

Also available

A one-bedroom unit is also available for single professionals and young couples. Its 42-sq-m area is equipped with a dining and living area, kitchen and a toilet and bath. For larger families, a bigger vertical home can be attained by combining two or more adjacent units.

Each of the 36 residential units at Da Vinci features at least one balcony for a view of the Laguna de Bay and the Sierra Madre Mountains, while wide windows allow natural lighting and fresh breeze to waft into the home.

Presidio's "city by the bay" features a collection of low- and mid-rise, residential and mixed-used use towers. Da Vinci is only the first of five towers Crown Asia primarily launched for Presidio at Brittany Bay—the Rembrandt Tower, Michelangelo Tower, Monet Tower and the Picasso Tower.

For property previews, call up Crown Towers at 718-4057, 718-3400 or 02 or 717- 3006 to 07.

Smart home finds its way to RP

From page B2-1

controlled washing machine, an Internet multiscreen plasma TV, and even an Internet microwave oven, will be on display at the Shangri-La Makati Hotel from May 8 to 10.

But don't expect the Star Trek look. Think of it more like Anakin Skywalker's Aunt Beru's home in Tatooine: warm and comfy, nothing fancy and metallic.

First 'smart home,' RP style

The architect responsible for setting up the vision of a high-tech home, Danilo A. Silvestre of DA Silvestre Association, has teamed up with Microsoft Philippines to create what could be the first mock-up "smart home," Filipino style.

Silvestre reveals he will be setting up a living room, an entertainment center, kitchen, study area, master's bedroom, master's toilet and a workstation based on the principle of this "smart home."

The mock-up home would be Wi-Fi and Internet-connected. It would not be a series of compartmented spaces, however, but would be interconnected to create the look that visitors are actually inside the house and not in a function room of a hotel.

What's more, the modernity of the appliances' features would be tempered by bamboo floorings, woven *soliya*, rattan for the wall panels and local art décor-items that are essentially Filipino-made.

"There's no attempt to make it look like the Jetson's house, or a futuristic home. It's a modern translation of what the team deems to be Filipino," says Silvestre.

Interconnected using Windows

They may not look like it, but the appliances, the workstations, the entertainment elements, the lighting, the telecommunications center, home security, electrical outlets and even the air-conditioning will be interconnected using Windows.

The entertainment center's centerpiece will be a 60-inch plasma TV fitted on the wall, complete with a 5.1 digital stereo system. Of course, a DVD player and an X-Box gaming console will be there, too. The walls will have woven *soliya* panels.

The master's bedroom will have another plasma TV. The TV, with multiscreen functions, will allow the viewer to monitor different areas of the house, such as the kids studying in another area.

To complete the "home-sweet-home look," typical mementos such as books, golf trophies, memorabilia, local artwork, lamps, toys will also be put in. Another wall using a finer *soliya* would be used behind the bed.

The bathroom will also feature a flat screen TV. "This is another way of subtly saying that even within what is to be considered the most private sanctum of your house, you could actually be entertained using technology," Silvestre says.

The Windows-based software can program a series of appliances within one mode. "You just point toward your main computer and that thing will program everything at the same time," explains Silvestre.

Laurie Mae Rivera-Moreno, Microsoft's PR and community affairs manager, said the company would like to make sure it integrates its technology into the home so that people would know that it is not just used for work but for fun and making life easier.

"We refer to it as the home of the future only because the technology as of now has not yet been widely used. In terms of its availability and capabilities, it is a technology of today. All of what is going to be showcased there is actually already feasible," stresses Silvestre.

Pricey today, cheap tomorrow

Though Silvestre admits that setting up an actual home today into a "smart" one could cost an additional P2 million to P3 million (mostly due to the cost of appliances), he reiterates that "it will eventually get to the stage where it will get cheaper."

Says Silvestre: "It's like the DVD player. We've avoided DVD players for years because they cost P30,000, and now they're available for just P2,000."

He stresses that even middle income families would eventually get to this level without having to spend an enormous amount.

Silvestre explains that the basic software and technology would not add a substantial amount since it is not hard-wired but uses Wi-Fi and Internet. He estimates the cost of the infrastructure would not be more than 10 to 15 percent of the current cost.

Silvestre adds that an ordinary P8,000 color TV can comply with "smart home" requirements via "smart" outlets. An air-con that is only remote-controlled and not Internet-connected could be reconfigured so that one could wire it to the Internet.

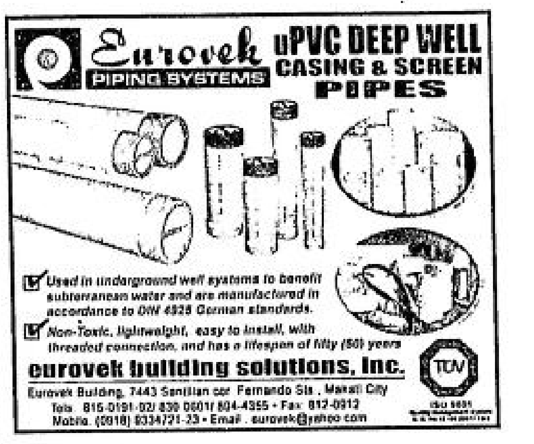
So, what can all these wireless technologies do for your home?

Rivera-Moreno says that with this kind of setup, you can just "call" your house, punch in a code, and automatically turn on or off any of the interconnected appliances. You want your air-con turned on before you arrive, so that the room is already cool and comfortable when you come in? Just call the house and "order" the air-con on.

Best of all, you can go back to the "Stone Age" anytime you feel like doing things the old-fashioned way.

"This doesn't have to be something that insinuates itself 100 percent into your life. You can select what you want to do. All you do is bypass the system and shut it down. But every time you need it, it's just there," says Silvestre.

And that's just perfect when your demanding in-laws go to your house unannounced. You can keep them entertained without having to be there. Neat, huh?



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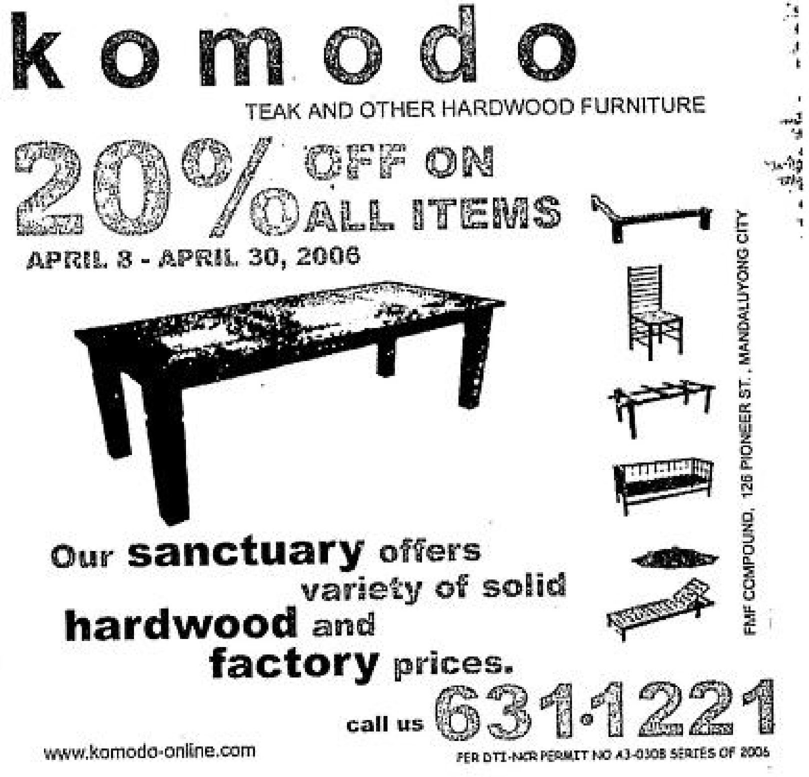

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Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY
San Ramon, Zamboanga City

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

CONSTRUCTION AND CONCRETE PAVING OF ZAMBOECOZONE 2nd INDUSTRIAL PARK ROAD COMPLEX (SEAFRONT - PHASE II)

1. The Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority (ZCSEZA), through SARO No. 0-05-07289 dated December 22, 2005 intends to apply the sum of **THIRTY-FOUR MILLION EIGHTY-TWO THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED FORTY-SIX PESOS & 38/100 ONLY (P34,082,646.38)** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for **"Construction and Concrete Paving of ZAMBOECOZONE 2nd Industrial Park Road Network (Seafront-Phase II)**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The ZCSEZA now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the for **"Construction and Concrete Paving of ZAMBOECOZONE 2nd Industrial Park Road Network (Seafront-Phase II)"**. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs and secure the Eligibility Documents upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **Two Hundred Pesos (P 200.00) on April 19-28, 2006 from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the BAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, ZAMBOECOZONE Administration Building.** Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents on **May 2, 2006 at 10:00 AM at the Audio Visual Room, 3rd Floor, ZAMBOECOZONE Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City.** Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the **BAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, ZAMBOECOZONE Administration Building on or before May 2, 2006, 10:00 AM**
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P2,500.00)**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative effective **May 2, 2006** until a day before bid opening, during office hours.
6. The ZCSEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on **May 11, 2006 at 10:00 AM at the Audio Visual Room, 3rd Floor ZAMBOECOZONE Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City**
7. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before **May 23, 2006 at 10:00 AM**

   All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the following form:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount In % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
Cash, Certified Check, Cashiers' Check, or Manager's Check	One Percent (1%)
GSIS Surety Bond	Two and a half Percent (2 ½ %)

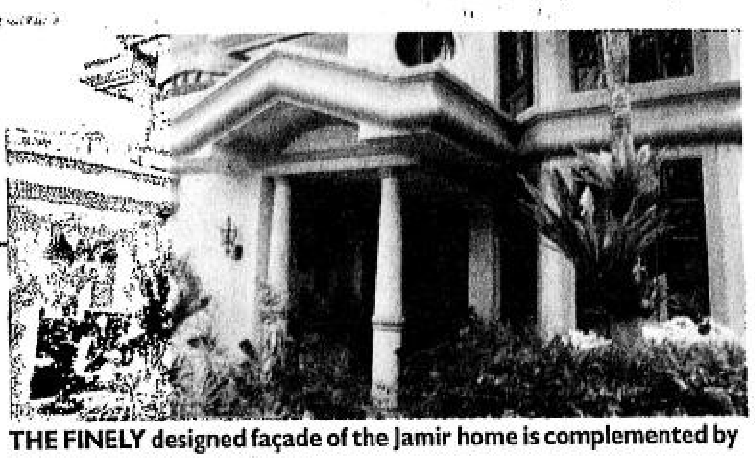
   Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on **May 23, 2006 at 10:00 AM at the Audio Visual Room, 3rd Floor, ZAMBOECOZONE Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below on **May 23, 2006 at 10:00 AM.**

8. Completion of the Works is required by 240 calendar days.
9. The ZCSEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) GEORGINA PANTALEON-YU
Chairman and Administrator
Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority
Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City
(062) 992-0409, (062) 993-0209
E-mail: Ecozone_bac@yahoo.com

(PDI—April 8 & 15, 2006)

The next big thing inspires good health, great times



THE FINELY designed façade of the Jamir home is complemented by the family's different plants.

AYALA LAND PREMIER DEVELOPMENT Ayala Westgrove Heights, touted as "the Next Big Thing after Ayala Alabang," offers choice and investment-worthy lots in a secure, safe environment south of Metro Manila.

Replete with gentle, natural surroundings and exceptional amenities that one can expect from the country's leading property developer, the exclusive residential development is also a healthier alternative to urban living. It is preferred by health-conscious individuals, including a number of doctor residents who enjoy their dream homes at the distinctly peaceful subdivision.

Change of scenery

Dr. Efren A. Jamir and wife Veni have lived in Ayala Westgrove Heights since 2001. His well-earned retirement from his 31-year private practice of general pediatrics in Florida required a change of scenery. He and his wife then returned to the Philippines, after living in the United States since 1971.

As one of several doctor residents in Ayala Westgrove Heights, Efren finds the importance of living in a lush and pollution-free haven. He considers the number of doctors a mere coincidence, and that the actual cross-section of homeowners is diverse. They have, however, similar interests and opinions when it comes to their subdivision.

Efren is reminded of their Florida home with their current environment. The place we lived in was like this; it has a rural setting but it was so close to the city. We lived several miles east of Orlando. In half an hour to 40 minutes, we were in Orlando; it's just like going to Alabang," he says.

Not crowded

He confides: "Initially upon my retirement, we went to Davao, and my wife went to Tagaytay to look at different locations. After that she saw the lots in Westgrove. We decided on Westgrove, because it's not crowded. Plus, it has that relaxing country setting. We immediately chose this also because my relatives live in Alabang and Imus, Cavite. We have good neighbors, and the subdivision has a friendly atmosphere."

Veni enthuses that it has many advantages over other living environments. The serene atmosphere is conducive to many activities that the numerous village clubs conduct. Ayala Property Management Corp. is also prepared to assist them should the residents need services specific to their homes or neighborhoods.

"Cleanliness is very important. We were looking for a place where we could be comfortable, where it's cool. In our old home in the US, we had trees, a lot of space and a closeness between the community members. We have a lot of friends there. It's the same here. If you need something, you know that somebody will come to your assistance," Efren says.

The couple enjoys gardening. They have a number of decorative flowering plants in their lawn, as well as fruit-bearing trees in their back yard. But when they're not concentrating on that hobby, they do other worthwhile activities, together and with their friends.

"I do medical missions," shares Efren. "That's when we do free checkups, and dispense medicine samples to those who need them.

Very relaxing

Their Seattle-based son visited them last year and found the place very relaxing. Says Efren: "He loved it. He loved the area, and he told us that he wants the house! It reminds him of Florida. When we lived there, instead of mango trees, we had orange trees. We're also looking forward to our three grandchildren; they'll enjoy the nearby playground and the clubhouse swimming pool."

The doctor offers that being part of this growing community has exceeded all their expectations: "Ayala Land has been excellent. You can trust them." Veni adds, "I don't think we'll ever leave Westgrove. We're very happy here!"

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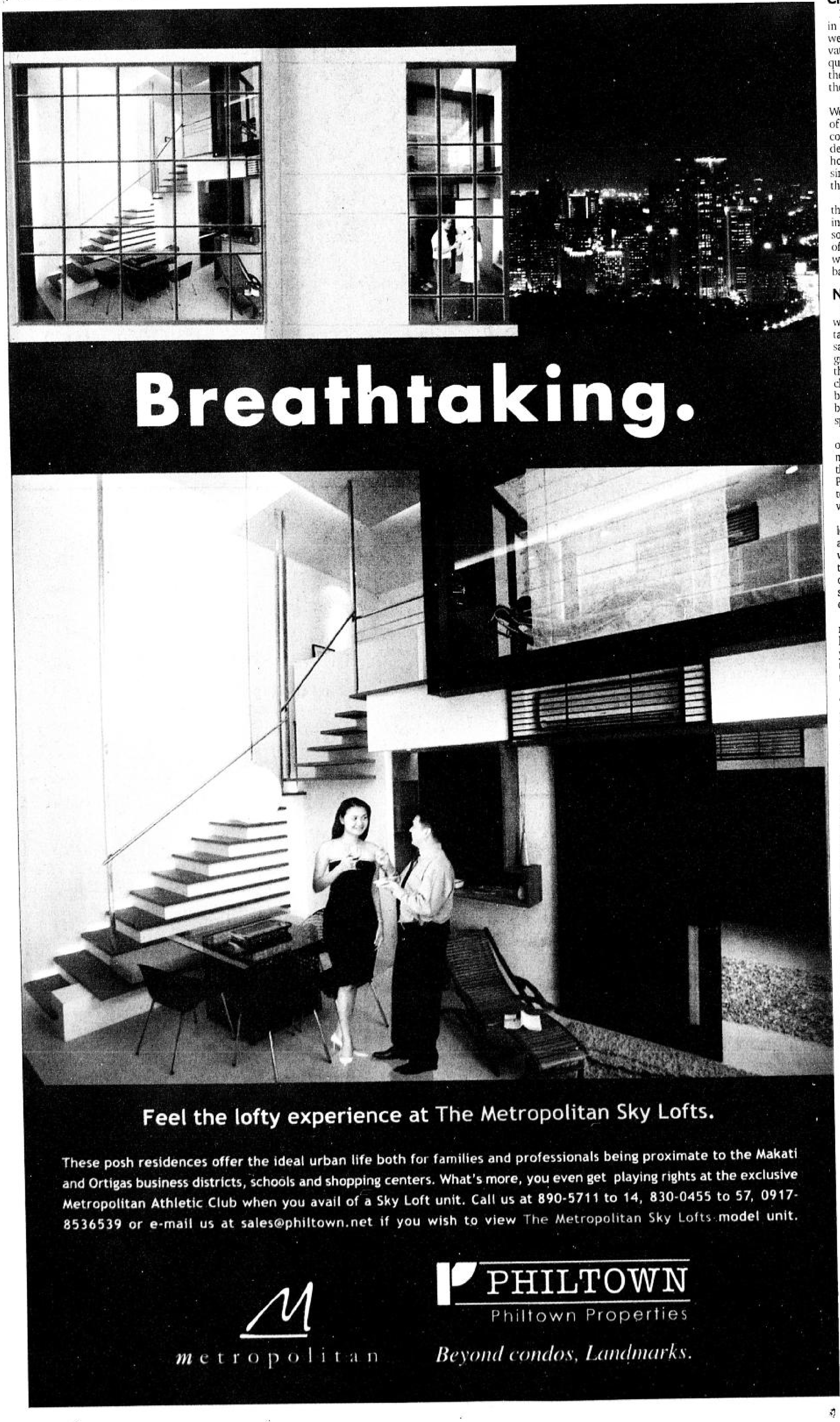

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slasH

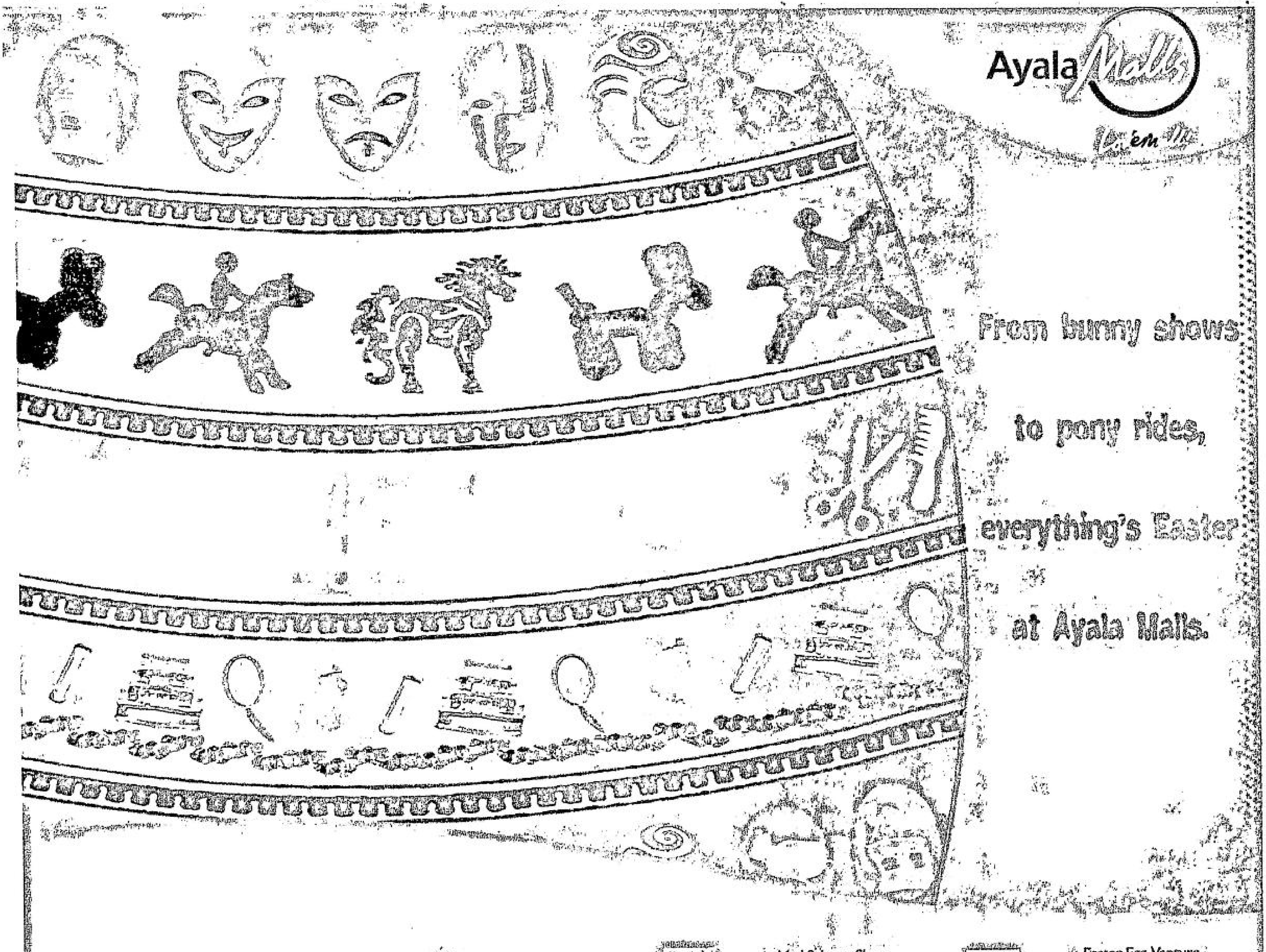
Nobody does it like Joey Mead
page C2

Super! exclusive on DJ Tiesto
page D1
+ Hed Kandi pics

PMAP's modelympics in Boracay marks 'Forever Summer!'
page E1

Pinoy Big Brother
page C4
Super! edition

Photography: MARK NICDAO
Styling: MILLET ARZAGA
Sittings Editor: DAVID MILAN
Makeup: KAKUYASU UCHIIDE, Shu Uemura Int'l Chief Makeup Artist using the BEJEWELED collection by CARISSA OLEDAN COSCOLLUELA
Hair: JANET DE RAMA using Kiehl's Stylists Series
Cover star: JOEY MEAD



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POSH PENANCE. Joey wears Shu Uemura's ruby encrusted Blush Fringe Lashes and the encrusted Motorazr V3i

CROWN OF BEADS. Joey wears diamond encrusted Artic Eyes Lashes.

Nobody does it like Joey Mead

Before anyone was called an 'It girl,' Joey was the ultimate 'it'—she still is

Tim Yap

Photos by Mark Nicdao

I SWORE TO MYSELF BEFORE that I would not wax nostalgic about the good ole glory days. Nothing sounds more dated than praising the eras that have gone by to high heavens without really knowing what's happening now. Because we are in the present generation, let's talk about the now—right this moment.

While doing a Super! shoot with super stylist **Millet Arzaga**, we had this idea of having a model don a headless skinned chicken as a head piece—our take on a PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) campaign. The thing is, we could not find the right model who could look sultry and seductive, even when wearing nothing but Magnolia chicken. We could only think of one girl, **Joey Mead**.

Before anyone was called an "It girl," Joey was the ultimate "it." Before anyone owned up to the title of being a VJ, she was THE VJ. At the clubs, from Faces to Euphoria to Mars (and now, Embassy—*ehem*), she would set dance floors ablaze with her va-va-voom presence and "conquer the dance floor" steps. Concoctions were named after her. Parties were held in her honor. Fashion folk bowed down to worship.

Enough about the past. Someone Up There must have heard our conversation about the chicken and sent Joey Mead back into our shores. After conquering Asia via the modeling and hosting route (her recent one was hosting for ESPN), even top-billing a Head and Shoulders campaign in the United States (of which she is a SAG card holder), she's back! And now that she's here, Millet and I decided to tie her up, and give her the latest Motorola Bling phone, just so we could truly keep in touch.

Joey has found a new love in the person of man about town and society eligible and Victoria Court scion **Ian King**. Or should I say he found her—courtesy of me, of course. *Ehem, ehem*—for Tim Yap matchmaking services, dial 1-800-TIMYAP) "Joey has a different glow these days—it really shows in her aura, and we are all so happy about that," confided **Marc Nelson**, one of Joey's best buddies who is also quite beaming these days because of a Brazilian beauty named **Priscilla Mereilles**, aka Miss Earth.

Now back to Joey. It is such a joy to watch her at a fashion shoot. Because nobody does it like her. Once in front of the lens, she gets possessed—literally. First she gives the photographer what he wants, in all the possible angles. After that she'll tell you, "And now, I'm gonna play." With a naughty wink, a roller coaster ride ensues, with Joey at the center of the action. A certain whirlwind persona gets unleashed and all the people in the team just freezes, all in awe of the THE Joey Mead.

At the latest Motobus launch that Joey hosted, my favorite band Kamikaze went onstage and declared to the world, "I've always had a crush on Joey Mead. Now that we saw her in person, *di pala siya maganda—kundi saksakan ng ganda*!"

Dear Super! readers—feast your eyes on our summer sizzler—Joey Mead, Joey Mead, Joey Mead!

JOEY MEAD

The thing I love most about what I do is... the chance to travel, express myself, meet amazing people and get rewarded with a thumbs up for a job well done. Then I treat myself to some of the world's greatest spas!

People might be surprised to know that... I enjoy catching Filipino flicks from the early '80s on Cinema 1—"Bagets" or my fave "Blusang Itim." Snooky and Richard were my fave loveteam.

The most important thing I've ever learned is that... you'll always be learning.

I wish when I started off I've been told to... SAVE MONEY. I wish I had opened a time deposit account years back! Grrr!

The worst thing that ever happened to me was... catching dengue fever in Singapore last year. Three days of viral torture. Damn mosquitoes!

And what this taught me was... I have some golden friends that went out their way to send me their healthy love.

My best ever outfit is... me naked in a tub of flowers. I can soak in that look for hours. Ahhhh...

My Super! Saturday night consists of... an endless variety of choices! Walking the walk with Tim Yap in Greenbelt or sashaying in Cuisine hand in hand with my King. Manila is mine for the taking... anywhere in my hometown is fffffffun!

The thing that makes me most angry is... Being *yabang* without a reason. I'm all for showing it off but not if it hurts, hinders or blatantly upsets others. You can shove that *yabang*-ness! If I see that, you'll be seeing me in your face—telling you off.

The best thing about family is that... they will support and love you no matter.

When I'm gone, they'll probably say... What a firecracker Mead was. Snap, Crackle, Pop, Baby. Wink!

My hero is... Angelina Jolie... I've never been attracted to the sweeties of the world but she embraces all aspects of a women I admire. Goodwill ambassador, mother of soon-to-be three. She is fearless. And it doesn't hurt that Brad Pitt is playing Dad. She's got it going on.

The thing that makes my life worth living is... Being able to somehow inspire, somehow encourage and hopefully succeed in making the women of the Philippines acknowledge their uniqueness and use it for their greater good. *MABUHAY*!

My most embarrassing moment was when... My breast popped out in a fashion show...free show?!

I'm saving up for... Chanel's new white ceramic J12 watch!

My biggest indulgence is... chocolate. Kitkat Chunky, Cadbury and buttered toast dipped in hot chocolate. Yum!!

I aspire to be... a fearless woman of truth... a woman of substance and depth... I am a woman hear me ROAR!

Styling: MILLET ARZAGA
Photography: MARK NICDAO
Sittings Editor: DAVID MILAN
Makeup: KAKUYASU UCHIIDE,
Shu Uemura Int'l Chief Makeup Artist using the
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HUNG UP ON YOU. Joey wears Vintage Vert Lashes, Emporio Armani Aviators from the 2006 S/S collection and the encrusted Motorazr V3i

Pinoy Big Brother (fill in the blank) Edition!

From page C4

Pinoy Big Brother: Brother Edition

Featuring the Eigenmanns, the Monteros, and the Quizons (there are 50 million of 'em). this special edition will have a very special tagline: "*Si Kuya, Kuya mo talaga!*"

The big winner gets, in the words of Keanna Reeves, "a big weaner."

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Pinoy Big Brother: Metro Body Calendar Edition

Never mind the crap the MTRCB's gonna raise over this, this is a ratings draw. And there is an edge to this idea: ancillary sales (DVD, iTunes, cable rights). I hear the "Girls Gone Wild" guy is so rich now, he's thinking of buying Playboy. This'd definitely bandage ABS' profit wound. *Wala lang*.

Pinoy Big Brother: Fish Edition

This comes from the genius that was Sky Cable's aquarium channel. I kid you not, there was an aquarium channel, and it obviously was ahead of its time. Watching PBB: Fish Edition would kinda be like watching ANC, but you'd pick an arowana over Ricky Carandang any day, wouldn't you?

This show's easy to produce, it doesn't cost much, and ABS won't have to worry about giving airtime to "PBB: Fish Edition" housemates. Oh yeah, and it promotes eco-consciousness.

Pinoy Big Brother: Indie Edition

59 days locked in Cubao X. But here's the twist: instead of stocking the place with nothing, forcing the housemates to make art out of, um, nothing, we give them state of the art recording equipment, Macs, and all the silk screen material they'll ever need (provided they stamp a little logo in somewhere). And here's an interesting challenge: We'll force them to pray to billboard-sized pictures of Gabby Lopez. Yeah.

The Big Winner gets a nice cubicle at the PBB writer's office.

If you think these stipulations are going to throw indie people off, you're wrong. *Everyone* wants to call themselves indie these days.

Pinoy Big Brother: Nginig Edition

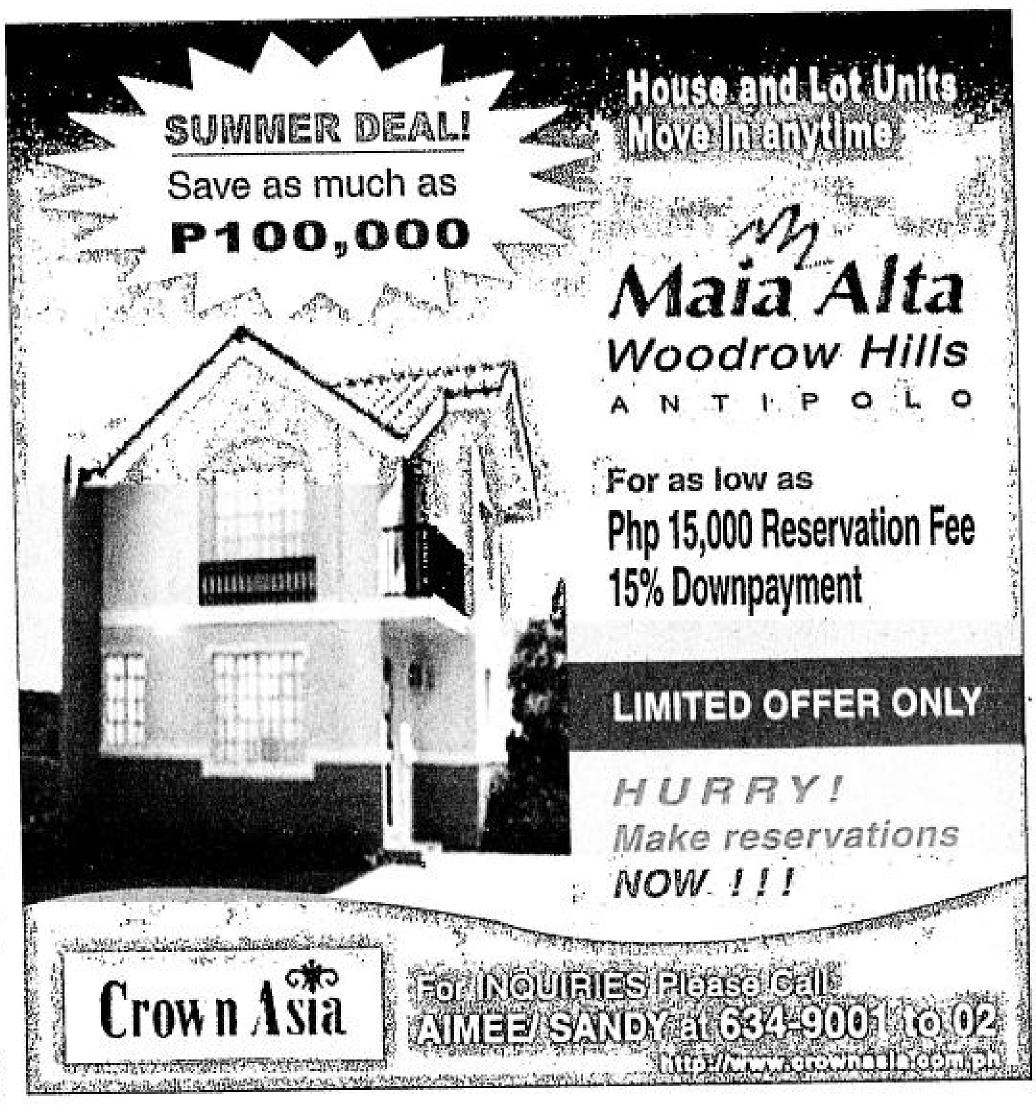
Why isn't this on the air yet? All we need is a haunted house—one in New Manila's fine—and 16 people brave enough to face ghosts like Antoinette Taus, the mean fat girl from "Sarah ang Munting Prinsesa," and Stefano Mori. (Oh, they aren't... Oh. Ok. Scratch that.)

Big Brother
FISH EDITION

PHOTO COURTESY OF EL NIDO RESORTS

Pinoy Big Brother: Rehab Edition

Imagine all these housemates with withdrawal symptoms—killing each other, eating the furniture, pissing on themselves. Imagine the drama we can get in the confession room. Imagine where we can go with the challenges. The press release will read, "This show features the plight of drug addicts. It will show the youth to stay away drugs." See, nothing for you moms and dads to worry about.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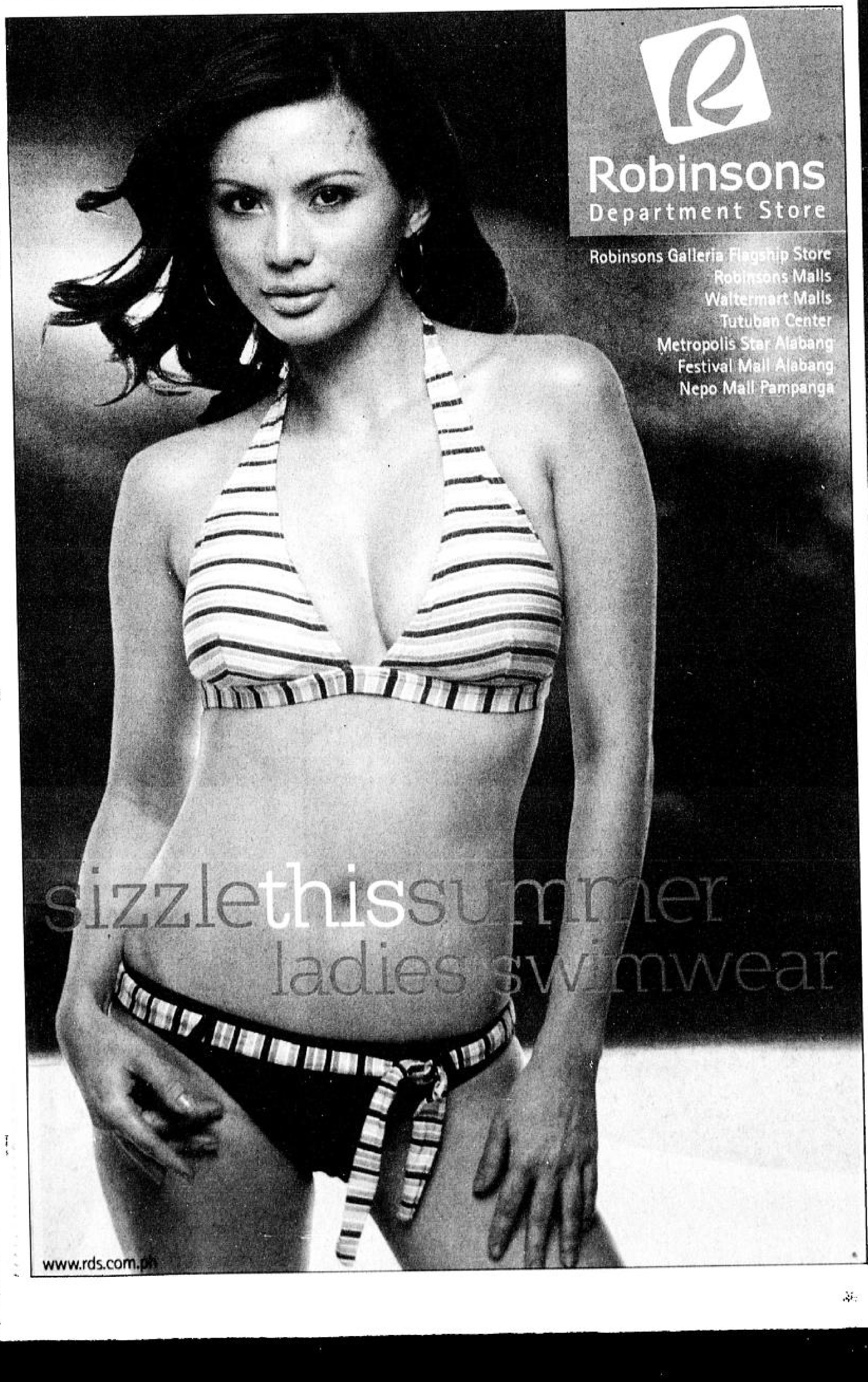
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based on 2005 ARO survey

Pinoy Big Brother (fill in the blank) Edition!

Text and images by Pepe Diokno

I DON'T WANNA BE THE guy who breaks it to you die-hard Pinoy Big Brother fans. (You know, you guys who got ZPDee just for PBB 24/7.) But I have conclusive evidence that Pinoy Big Brother is ***about to die***.

The Celebrity Edition just finished, and Teen Edition's coming up. Think about it: Survivor didn't go the celebrity route until its eighth edition (with Survivor All-Stars), and the Amazing Race didn't go kiddie until season eight (with the Family edition).

TV shows like to shake things up to keep audiences interested. You know, 'coz concepts get stale. Pinoy Big Brother is on "we must keep people interested" mode on its *second season*. That may mean two things. One, that its producers sense the show's going down the toilet and they need to pump it up; and two, that the producers are dumb and aren't playing their cards right.

I'm for option two.

But regardless of whether the show is going down the toilet, I also have proof that PBB's eating itself alive, and it won't last four more seasons. See:

If ABS-CBN averages three seasons a year, they're going to have to come up with three extra shows a year just to showcase former PBB talents. (Can you imagine three more shows like "Gudtaym?" I bet you don't want to.)

By season five next year, there will be nearly 100 former housemates—nearly 100 new Kapamilyas. They really can't fit everyone on Channel 2, but what if their Recycle Bin, Studio 23, fills up as well?

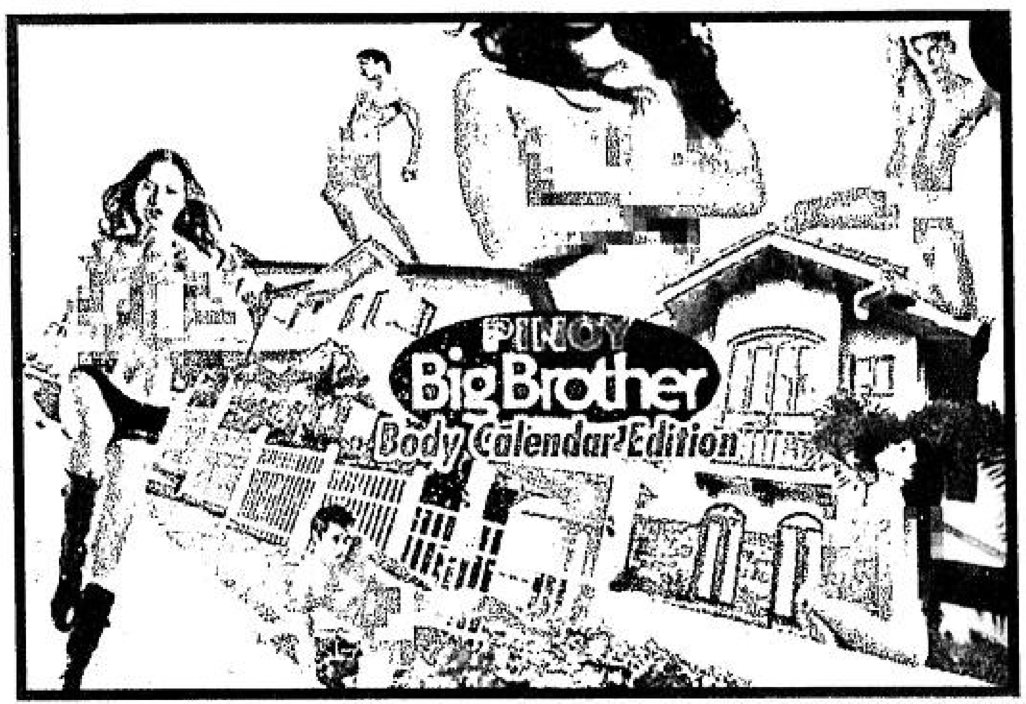
There's going to be such an abundance of former housemates that by season five, ABS-CBN will have no choice but to shut down PBB.

And if they do manage to juggle all their former housemates, it just proves the saying, "Reality stars get 10 minutes of fame. On ABS-CBN they get 0.864." That's not good for the network, is it?

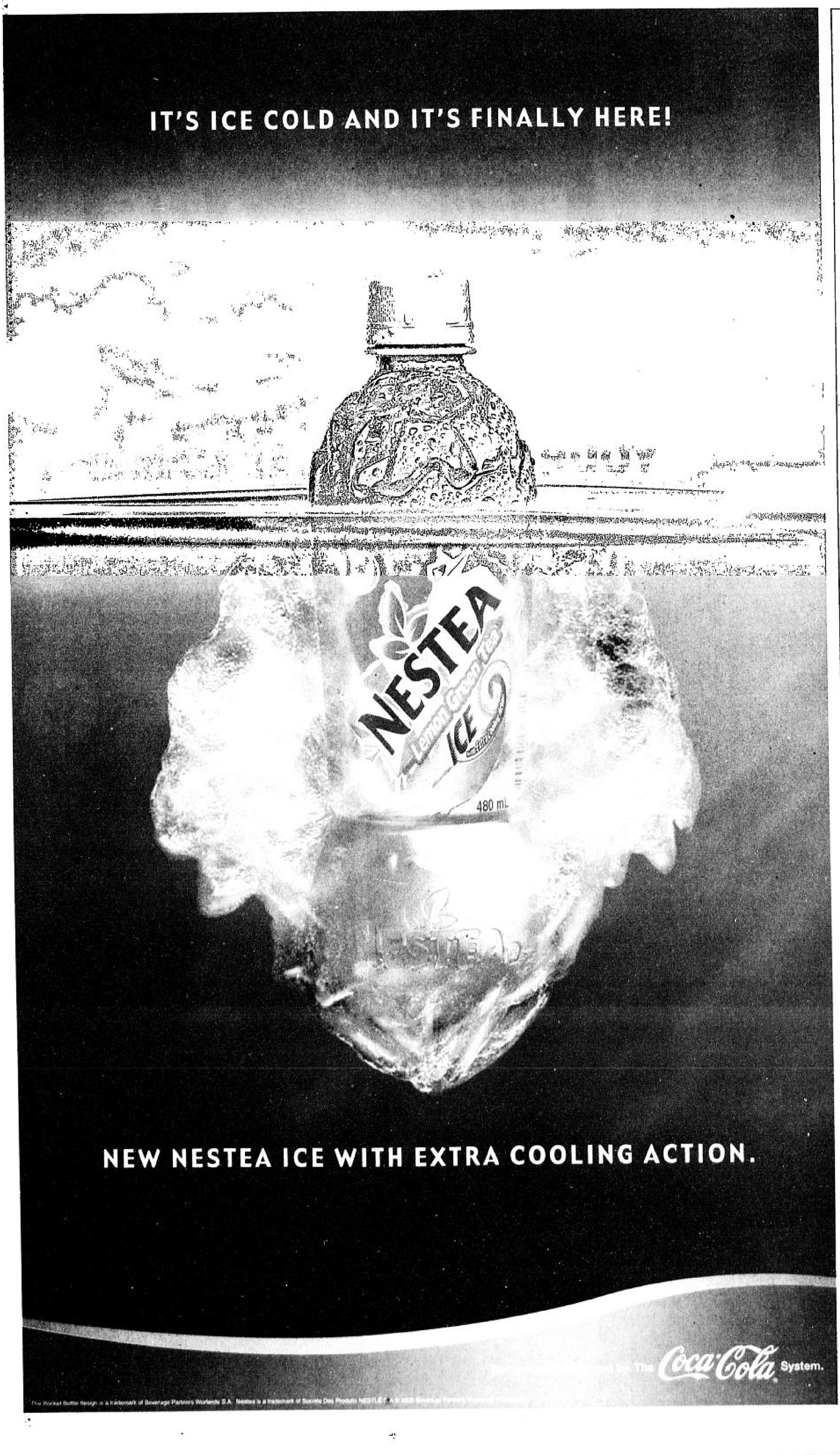
See, it's definite disaster for PBB. The only way for the scenarios above not to happen is if PBB reaches its saturation point by season three. (But that is a big possibility.)

However, I have a soft spot for ABS-CBN (because GMA 7 reminds me of Ethel Booba, Diego, the Sex Bomb Dancers, and other random fuglies), so I decided to help them out. I took a night off from normalcy to brainstorm for possible editions of PBB. Here's a short list of what I've come up with. (If you want the other 7,842 ideas, give me a call. And money.)

PINOY/ C3



PHOTOS FROM THE 2005 METRO BODY CALENDAR WITH CANYON WOODS AS BACKGROUND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I Know What to Do This Summer

Now that summer's made its searing presence felt and school has become a memory, you've got to find creative ways to stay occupied-and stay cool. We've compiled this list of summer must-dos, just so you can say *I know what to do this summer.*

Discover a secret beach. Summer always equals the beach, and with our 7,000-plus islands, you're sure to find some secluded paradise. So whip yourself into bikini-shape, gather the friends (or venture off solo!), pack up your Lonely Planet and ride off into an adventure. Just make sure you slather on some sunblock.

Get wet. If you've spent most of your life as a landlubber, then it's about time you get more than your toes wet! Try wakeboarding at Caliraya, scuba diving in Anilao, parasailing in Boracay, surfing in Siargao, kayaking in Palawan…the list is endless. Aside from the cool factor-you can casually say, "Oh, I was surfing last weekend,"-you also get to see the world in a different light.

Go to the zoo. Make some new friends-of the furry, feathered and scaly kind. Avilon Zoo in Montalban or even good old Manila Zoo in Manila can be a fun way to spend the day. Plus you get to learn more about the creatures that we share our world with. This eye-opening experience will also melt your heart towards the plight of the endangered species.

Take a class. Be it painting, baking, writing, dancing, jewelry-making or even underwater basket weaving, use this down time to turn yourself into a more rounded person. And when school comes around, you can dazzle your friends with the new-and-improved you.

Read! Just to keep your brain from stagnating, make sure you take a book with you wherever you go. And when you whip out your *Catcher in the Rye* on the beach, it could even start a conversation with that goregous intellectual on the blanket next to you.

Volunteer for a cause. Sign up with organizations like Gawad Kalinga, PAWS, WWF (that's Wildlife, not Wrestling), or your neighborhood community center and be a person for others! You'll discover that you receive more than you give.

Feel the rush. No matter what you get into this summer, make sure it's something you'd enjoy. That way, you're sure to feel that rush of maximizing your potential while making the most of your time. Now to get another kind of rush, try the new Nestea Ice.

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Manila had Tiesto and Hed Kandi in one night. Where were you that morning?

THE SHOWDOWN

Dance, dance Revolution

By Tim Yap
Tiesto photos by Willy Saw and Mags Paguyo
Hed Kandi photos by Daniel Tan

REPORTING FROM THE PARTY SCENE. From Hed Kandi to Tiesto and beyond

ONE NIGHT, TWO major, massive dance events.

Can Manila handle a double mania of this magnitude? Kibitzers had their doubts. Why didn't the promoters just work together to create one giant event to prevent a clash? There was even mudslinging on both sides, with each party feeling like the aggrieved one.

"I kept mum all throughout, even if Big Fish was being maligned," said **Pixie Cheah** the night of the Hed Kandi party. Tiesto producer **Stephen Ku** on the other hand felt harassed at first because he felt he was being bullied by the other party, making the mounting of his event extra-hard. Weeks before the clash of the party titans, one question was being thrown around campuses, gyms and clubs—"Where will you be—**Tiesto** or Hed Kandi?"

Both were sponsored by Addict Mobile and Motorola, both had billboards on Edsa, both had the same party crowd deciding on which event to attend. I made sure to attend both festivities, because I thought this was a good case study on youth and pop culture. Both musical acts are established brands, so I wanted to know how marketing muscle flexing affects youth purchasing decisions.

Did the people who went to Tiesto really know who he was? Were they really familiar with his music? Did the Hed Kandi crowd have a collection of their musical compilations? Or were people just driven by hype, endless spam invites and mass texts sent to the whole world?

It also helped that March 31 was the night when most of young Manila had their graduation rites. So for the young uns, it was really a time to celebrate. (So note to future event planners and marketers—make sure you throw something within the March 31 vicinity.)

I didn't see anyone wearing a toga that night—but personally, I saw it as a form of graduation for the scene. Sans the negative talk from both camps, the big winner here, as I've mentioned in an earlier column, is us. Competition always strives to make us better. We Pinoys have a tendency to back down from a good "friendly" fight in the name of "*pakikisama*." Yes, it is a business, so run it like a business. Just don't take it personally.

Tasting Hed Kandi

My first stop was the Hed Kandi party, as I had to cover it for my show MTV Bling (with a new time slot, prime time Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.). I arrived at the World Trade Center before midnight, but mistakenly went to another party where the banner "Happy birthday, Gorgeous Rose!" greeted me. I saw people in pink gowns. Hmm. This was not Hed Kandi. Maybe Cotton Candy. So I moved on.

I was early, for the first time, and I saw a lot of celebrities who normally arrive late but were also early birds that night. While doing my spiels, I saw them slowly slipping out, tiptoeing their way to nearby Tiesto at the PICC Tent. Big Fish's party had silver stars emblazoned as part of their set and the requisite big screens and elevated VIP areas surrounding their giant bar.

As always, I had a ball with DJ **Anton Ramos'** set that became the prelude to the Hed Kandi mix. Since I've become friends with **Jamie Richards** of Hed Kandi, I stayed for a bit and grooved to their tunes—all feel-good beats. The vibe was evident in the audience, albeit not that packed, it was obvious that they were having a blast. For the first time, I really had space (lots of it) to dance.

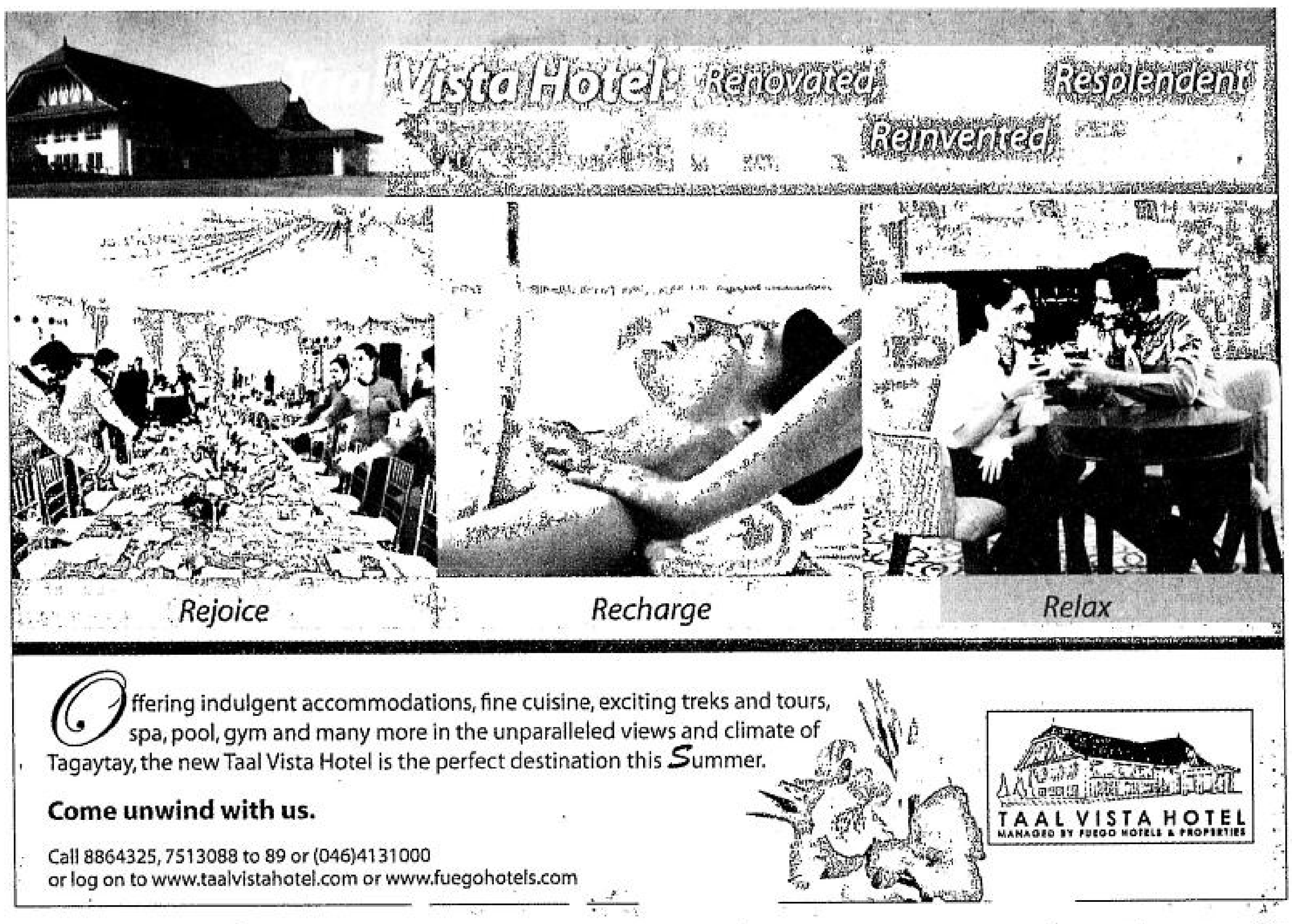
New Tiesto-ment

And then I went to Tiesto. A foreign DJ once told me not to believe the hype, since Tiesto has the tendency to play "hardcore trance." So I had no expectations, even if this guy has played at Olympic events and is touted to be the world's number one DJ. Although I must admit I do like the guy because we had the chance to talk (plus we share the same birthday) and I admire his vision—he is really out to conquer the world.

Right outside the venue, the

DANCE/ D2

KIDS IN THE KANDI STORE. Who said Hed Kandi was empty?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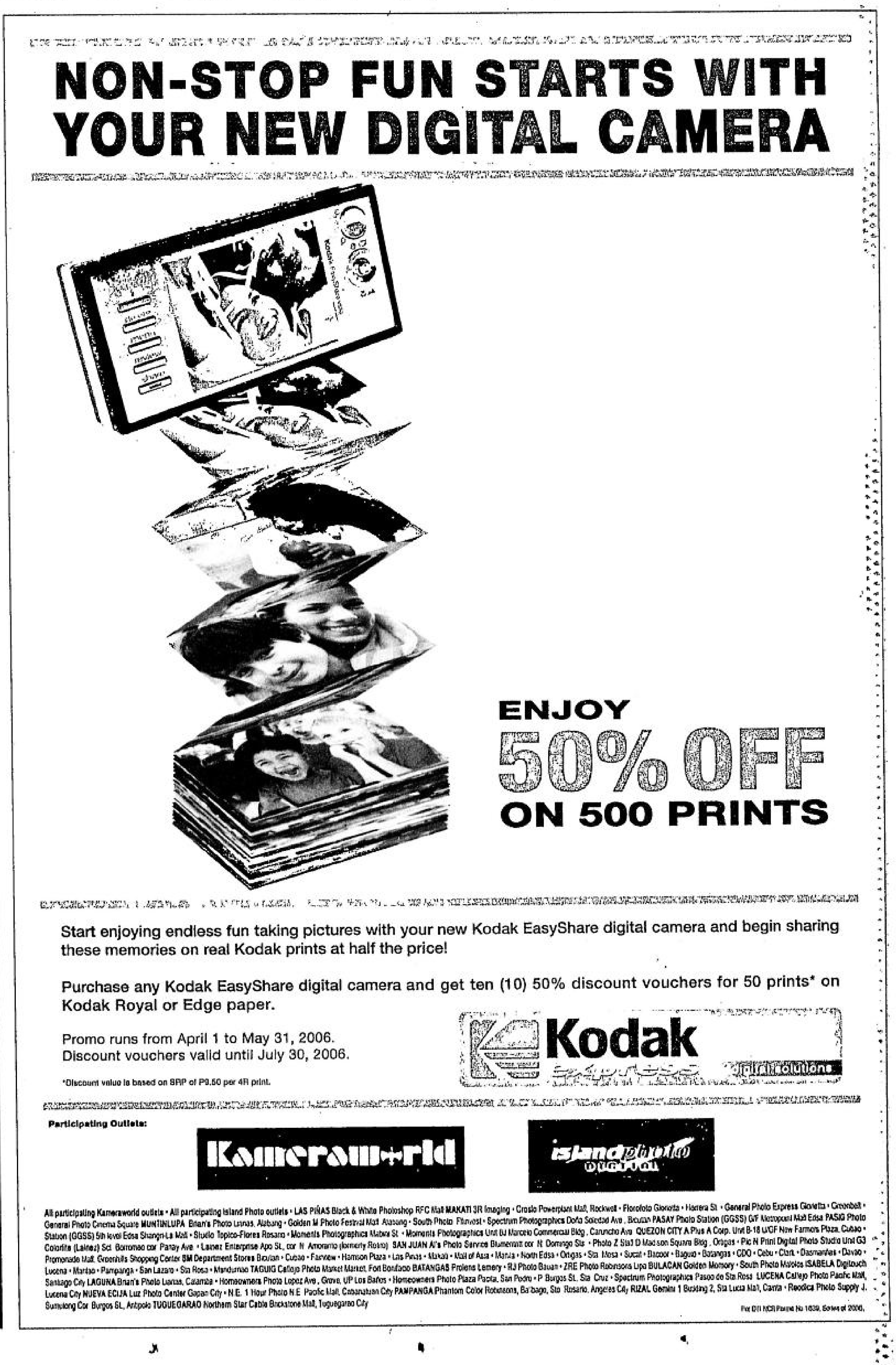
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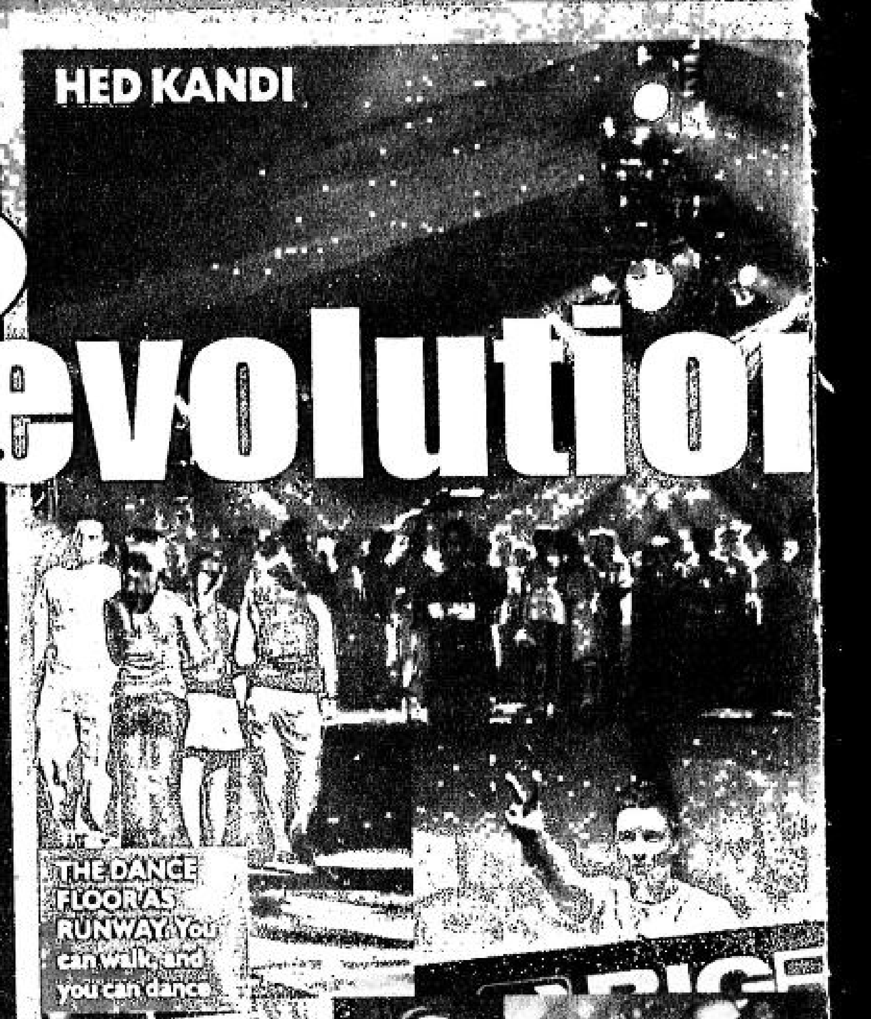
Dance, dance Revolution

TIESTO


HED KANDI

THE DANCE FLOOR AS RUNWAY. You can walk, and you can dance.

From page D1

feeling of excitement was palpable. Some partyphiles were stuck outside because tickets had run out. I went straight in and got my stamp from the door people. I got lost in the cavernous halls of the party venue, gravitating towards the light that shone on the god of the night—DJ Tiesto. A rough estimate would have been 10,000 revelers in one packed venue.

It took me quite some time before I reached the front part of his signature circular booth, a spaceship-looking pedestal with screens that beamed everything from graphics to skyscrapers to the lyrics of his music.

The thing about Pinoy partyphiles is that when they hear of a superstar, all they do is gawk. Instead of really dancing to Tiesto's trance, they just put out their camera phones and recorded the moment. Not to say that no one was dancing—a lot of people were high with musical intoxication.

I looked around and saw a lot of people smiling, with fists up in the air. Whereas other raves would have plenty of people posing as vegetables, lying down on the sides, these partyphiles were fruits—in various shapes and colors, all gyrating to the thump-thump-thump blaring from the speakers.

My Tiesto high came when the words of "Just Be" were flashed onscreen—"They say learning to love yourself is the first step that you take when you want to be real. And flying on planes and exotic locations won't teach you how you really feel. Face up to the fact that you are who you are. And nothing can change that belief."

I know that's a lesson Tiesto delivered through trance.

The real message

I became a convert after reading those lines. I realized that artists really have messages to convey to their audience in various forms.

But I wanted to dance. So I did the rebellious thing by hopping to Hed Kandi once more where I had an even bigger dance floor all to myself. The people who remained were Big Fish loyalists and the people who truly loved Hed Kandi (and maybe the ones who didn't get Tiesto tickets). There I danced like there was no tomorrow.

The verdict? Tiesto [illegible] made a lot of people [illegible] ize that today's party [illegible] one [illegible] one thing I cannot [illegible] buying power at the [illegible] crowd pleaser. And [illegible] churning out delicio[illegible]

[illegible] Manila can ho[illegible] same time. We are [illegible] times we feel mentor[illegible] the challenge of bein[illegible] you have people from [illegible] nothing to do but jud[illegible] are synthetic and [illegible] other people are stuc[illegible] the fish bowl that they [illegible] to swim inside the [illegible] you're no longer on the [illegible]

We need brave [illegible] boundaries for the [illegible] that's open to bigger [illegible] know how to have f[illegible] not here to judge [illegible] ity and growth [illegible] but for this generation [illegible]

WORSHIP WORSHIP. Brazilian models slash Tiesto groupies

MOSH MUSH. Gwen Garci raised the Tiestosterone levels up

MOTO MANIA. Mari Litonjua, Leah de Guzman and Angela Romero-Salas

BOYS IN THE MOOD. JM Rodriguez and Patrick Garcia

OUT AT NIGHT. Rustom Padilla went to both parties

GENERATION GRAB. Cell phones are the new glow sticks

MAD HATTER'S BALL. Wow, glow sticks!!

PARTY POSTER BOY. William Davarthi

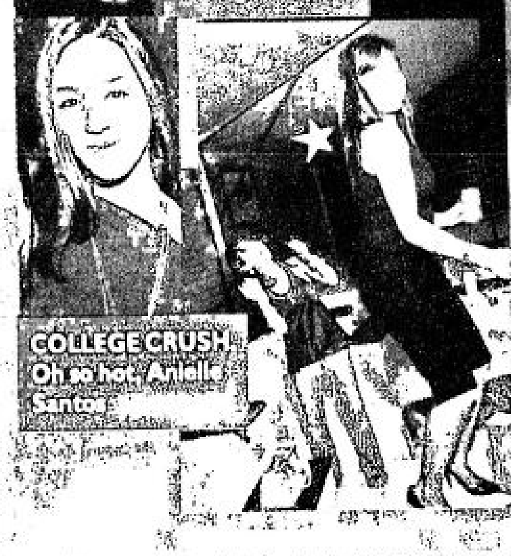
TIESTOMONIAL. Rey and Adrian [illegible] parties together

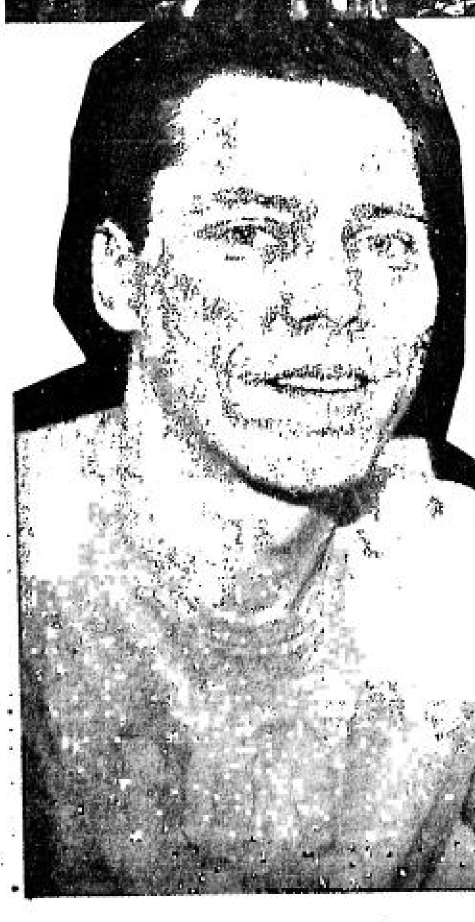
BIG FISH IN OUR OCEAN. Pixie Cheah promises more parties to come

MULTIPLE O. Oudine Santos, fresh as ever; Denise Albert, partyphiliac

PARTY POPS. Travis Kraft and Tootoots Layeza

CHIMARA KALA. JP Tanchangco at Hed Kandi


COLLEGE CRUSH. Oh so hot, Anielle Santos



SUPER EXCLUSIVE! ONE ON ONE WITH THE WORLD'S NO. 1

Tiestosterone overload

By Tim Yap

HOW DO YOU RECHARGE? YOU have all these gigs all over the world, where do you get your energy?

It's basically from the people. It's like a force. You know, when I play, the crowd focuses on the stage, my music. That's where I get my energy going.

By the way, we're both born on the same date, January 17th.

Really? Cool!

What other music do you listen to aside from your music?

I listen to a lot of dance and rock music actually.

What do you do with leisure time outside the music scene?

There's nothing much time for it really, to be honest. You work for almost 24 hours. It's crazy. It's always about working on your music.

What constantly gives you that inspiration to keep on going?

When everybody loves your music. When you get to travel around the world. It's not a job for me. It's really amazing.

With all the things you've achieved, which one is your favorite?

Everything. It's all different aspects put together.

Are you the type of person who always wants to achieve more, to go to the next level?

Yes. that's a typical Capricorn thing as well. you're always hungry. You always roll. You're never completely satisfied with yourself, with what you are and with what you have.

Do you have plans to open up a club or any other ventures?

Well yeah, we're already talking about opening a club in LA. Because it's like the central of the world for entertainment.

You've played all over the world, where do you feel you get the best reception?

It's hard to say. Actually, EVERYWHERE. It's a crazy, crazy world.

So what do you think makes your music transcend barriers and make the world smaller?

Well, its instrumental music. The melodies and stuff just open people up.

What was the most extreme thing that has ever happened to you?

Hmm. A lot really. But there's an interesting one in Argentina. I was playing this record and then I stopped it intentionally. The whole crowd, like 15,000 people uniformly sat down on the floor. But when I started playing my music again with a fast drum roll beat, everyone started standing, jumping and dancing again.

It was like commanding those people through your music! As a DJ, do you still find time to play in a small, intimate crowd like, for your friends?

Yeah, I do that actually, but I don't play Tiesto songs at all. Just a little house and dance.

Being a superstar DJ that you are, people put you in this box, do you sometimes wanna get away from that box?

I don't really wanna get out that box coz I love that box! But sometimes, I'd feel like going out, going to other bars and listen[illegible] ting notic[illegible]

With a[illegible] your que[illegible] you still [illegible] friends o[illegible]

Mostly [illegible] around [illegible] thing ab[illegible] with me [illegible] somehow[illegible]

Who a[illegible] you look[illegible]

There [illegible] who are [illegible] Mark No[illegible]

What [illegible] Philippi[illegible]

People [illegible] and they [illegible]

Special[illegible]

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HED RUSH. Andy Worburton declares peace with Tiesto.

PARTY PONDS. Sam Yen and Rose Montenegro

OIL BLOT. For fresh, matte looking skin, I use...

DANCE OUT PROJECT. Our very own Anton Ramos opened for Hed Kandi

ing to other DJs without get-
ed.
ll the things you're doing in
st for world domination, do
have time for family and
are you always in the studio?
in the studio and concerts
he world. That's the hard
ut it. But my friends travel
my tours so it's a good thing

mong your colleagues do
up to?
re a couple of DJs in Holland
coming up strong—like DJ
man.
do you think about the
es?
re very warm, very educated
efinitely love dance music!

thanks to World Wide Womb

Party boys undressed

RIDING ON THE POPULARITY of *fantaseryes* airing on television today, X-RAY returns to feature the sexiest heroes primetime has to offer.

Top billing the roster of fantasy men is none other than Encantadia star, Alfred Vargas. After winning GMA 7's coveted Viewers Choice Awards for Sexiest Male Actor, Alfred brandishes his hunky appeal in a special X-RAY shoot pegged as his most daring to date. This time, he goes all the way—proving that he is truly a sex symbol of our time. Also included is teen heartthrob, Jake Cuenca who is part of GMA7's new *fantaserye*, Majika.' Jake sheds his clothes for the first time—showing all his fans that he is all grown up. He banishes his awkward boyish body to exhibit a body fit for a future underwear model.

X-RAY
JAKE CUENCA
JUSTIN CUYUGAN
KRIS MARTINEZ

JAKE takes the cake.

Joining the elite fantasy roster as well is Arthur Solinap, Alfred Vargas' comrade-at-arms in Encantadia. Arthur is set to make his own mark in the local showbiz scene as he plays a bigger and more pivotal role when the *fantaserye* hit returns. He works out daily in preparation for his role and he reveals this well-toned body exclusively in X-RAY. Also look out for Justin Cuyugan of Etheria. The tall, dark and handsome actor had no qualms in starring in a pictorial where he portrays a boyfriend who videotapes himself for his girlfriend's pleasure.

The jam-packed issue includes other stars like Biboy Ramirez, Jake Roxas and Kris Martinez, a showbiz newcomer who was a former Close Up To Fame finalist. Lastly, Starstruck Ultimate Survivor Mike Tan goes shirtless only for X-RAY.

Wait no longer for the anticipated return of X-RAY featuring sixty pages of pictures showcasing the finest photography in the country today. Also included is a special folded insert featuring five hot male models.

X-RAY Number Two is available only in select stores starting April 7. Get your copy for only P380 from CV Magazine in Landmark, Fully Booked, Bibliarch, Papyvore, Bufini and Filbars outlets. X-RAY is published by X-RAY Media Publications.

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Coming from either Cubao, Katipunan Rd. (White Plains), or Ortigas Ext., you may reach Marcos Highway via Aurora Boulevard, Cinco Hermanos or Imelda Ave. respectively. Go straight past Sta. Lucia Mall for 1.5 kms., and you will see the main gate of Filinvest Homes East on the right side of the road.

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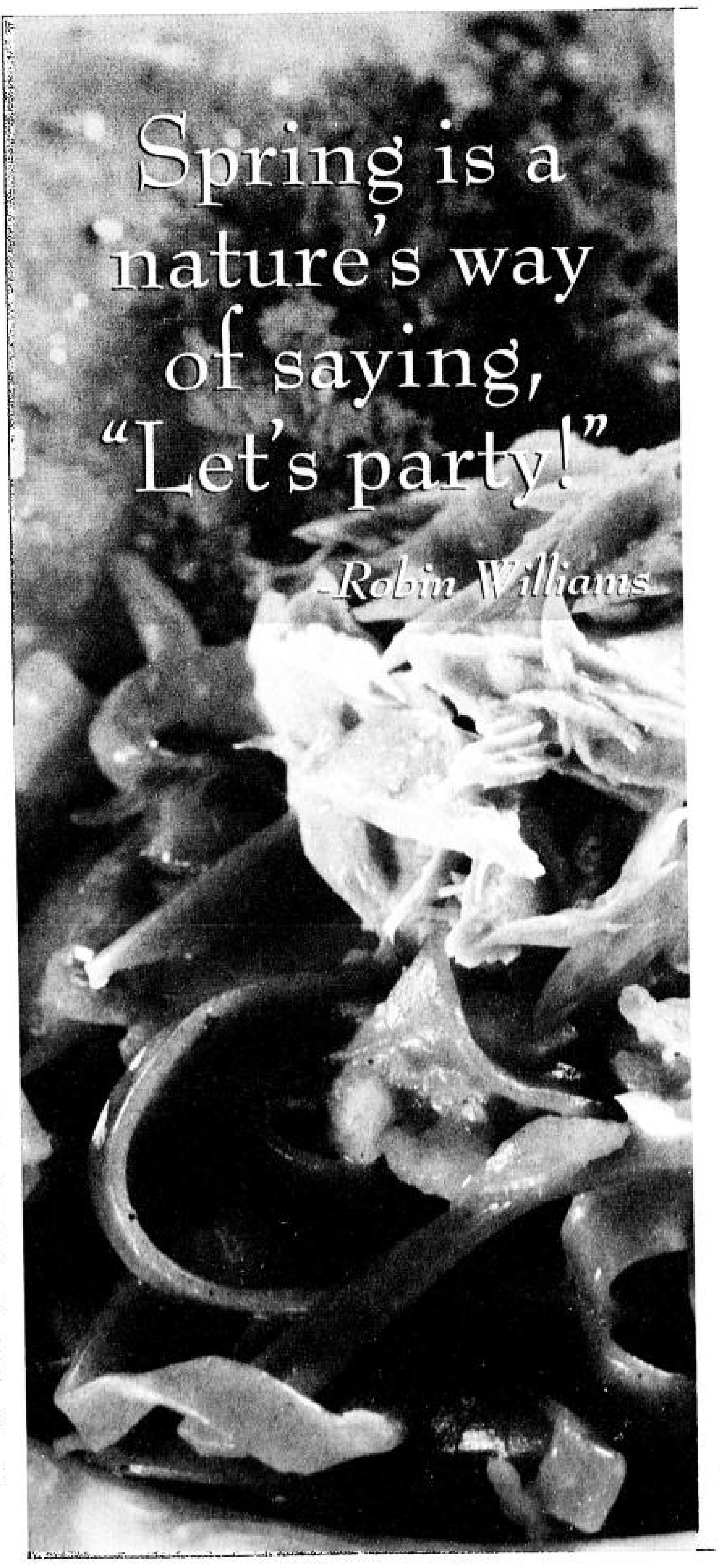

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Greenhills Shopping Center
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GREENHILLS
Shop & Live!
www.greenhills.com.ph

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4 SM SUPERMALLS SIZZLE WITH HOT BUYS

It's time once more to go supermalling and grab the hottest bargain finds at **SM City San Lazaro**, **SM City Marilao**, **SM City Cagayan de Oro** and **SM Supercenter Molino** during their simultaneous **3-DAY SALE** on **April 7**, **8** and **9**.

SM City San Lazaro

SM City Marilao

SM Supercenter Molino

SM City Cagayan de Oro

3 day sale

apr 7•8•9

up to

50% OFF

great selections mallwide

get a chance to

WIN

JVC®

The Perfect Experience

XA-HD500 Digital Audio Player
with every P500 purchase at
any participating mall establishments

mall hours:
10am-10pm

SM City SAN LAZARO
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. AI-203, Series of 2006

SM City MARILAO
Per DTI-BULACAN Permit No 011, Series of 2006

SM City CAGAYAN de ORO
Per DTI-MOR-X-035, Series of 2006

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
Per DTI-CAVITE Permit No. 008, Series of 2006

Up to
50%OFF
on a wide selection
of wears, styles,
gadgets galore
perfect
for summer!

WIN NEW AUDIO!

JVC XA-HD500
DIGITAL AUDIO PLAYER

At stake are

10 units per mall

Raffle Draw Schedule:

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
April 9, 10pm
(10 units)

SM CITY MARILAO
April 9, 9:15pm-9:45pm
(10 units)

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
April 7, 10pm, 3 units
April 8, 10pm, 3 units
April 9, 10pm, 4 units

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
April 7 & 8, 4pm, 7pm, 10pm
April 9, 1pm, 4pm, 7pm, 10pm

3-Day Sale shoppers get a chance to join the raffle event with only P500 purchase at any participating mall establishments.

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

Conveniently located along A.H. Lacson Avenue and Felix Huertas Street in historic Manila, SM City San Lazaro showcases an exciting and varied range of merchandise and services that answers the shopping needs of thousands of stop-over mallers. Bring your kids to the new SM Storyland

SM CITY MARILAO

Shoppers are encouraged to shop for half-price discounts on a wide choice of wearables, health and beauty products, home furnishings and many more. SM Hypermarket fresh food and SM Department Store summer fashions await you!

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO

Easily reached thru Daang Hari road, SM Supercenter in Molino now serves more and more Caviteños, offering the convenience of one-stop fun malling and food tripping.

More fresh goods are in store for you at SM Hypermarket.

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

The 3-DAY SALE raffle event is expected to attract summertime shoppers on the lookout for more value buys.

Customers should check out the summer styles at SM Department Store, take a breather in any of the fine restaurants, and shop for grocery promo offers at SM Supermarket.

SM Foodcourt Offering a variety of specialty food counters, SM Foodcourt is the ideal place to pause for cool treats this summer before you shop for more great finds in the mall.

SM FOODCOURT

SM Cinema It's time again for SM Cinema's One, Two, Three, FREE promo! Come in groups of 4 and get your Movie Time tickets for the price of 3! Promo valid only during the 3 days sale.

SM CINEMA

Super 3

E-mail: super@inquirer.com.ph
Text us your feedback: inquirer sup name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

PMAP'S MODELYMPICS 2006

Going for the gold ... Model

I STOOD NERVOUSLY ON THE beachfront with my teammates as the other teams exchanged joking taunts at each other.

"Be prepared for some ass-whooping, girlash," **Bianca Valerio** told me, confident with Mr. Sports Unlimited himself, **Marc Nelson**, on her team.

"Eat our dust ... I mean sand," I retorted dorkily.

Beyond the runway

Raya Mananquil

It was March 31st in Boracay, where PMAP models, directors, designers and celebrities have gathered together to compete in the Modelympics. It would have been far easier if the tasks we performed went along the lines of our profession: A hair and makeup relay followed by a quick change into your haute couture and finally working the catwalk towards the finish line. However thanks to the folks of Extra Challenge, they gave us one hell of a grueling island race.

Amidst the hooting, I could smell sunscreen

GOING/ E3

LOVE IS BLIND FOLDED. Model couple Raya Mananquil and Corey Wills get wet

OH NAN! Nancy Castillogne

SEXY PREXY PMAP president [illegible] Samson

SHORTS UNLIMITED Marc Nelson

CHASE [illegible]

WHERE is Mayor Dong Cawaling?

LOW DOWN

99K ONLY*
SPECIAL EDITION OPTRA 1.6 A/T
Plus Free Auto Insurance

69K ONLY*
SPECIAL EDITION AVEO 1.5 M/T
Plus Free Auto Insurance

OUR FINANCING SCHEMES HAVE COME TO A COMPLETE DROP. TOMORROW, YOU COULD BE REVVING UP THE SPECIAL EDITION CHEVROLET AVEO WITH ALL ITS ADDED SPUNK: 15-INCH ALLOY WHEELS, BODY KIT AND A NIFTY AERODYNAMIC SPOILER. NOT THE SPORTY TYPE? THE SPECIAL EDITION CHEVROLET OPTRA COMES TAILORED WITH LEATHER SEATS, WINDOW VISORS, REAR SHADES, A LEATHER-WRAPPED STEERING WHEEL AND REVERSE SENSORS— ALL FOR YOUR DRIVING PLEASURE. REV UP TO YOUR CHEVROLET DEALER BEFORE THIS OFFER GOES.

Promo Period: April 2-30, 2006. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2085, Series of 2006.

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MODEL	SRP	DOWNPAYMENT	* LOW DOWNPAYMENT 12	18	24	36	48	60	LOW MONTHLY @50% DP/60 mos
Aveo 1.5 M/T	570,000	59,000	45,495	31,175	24,175	17,204	13,782	12,009	6,831
Aveo 1.5 A/T	610,000	69,000	48,166	33,005	25,595	18,214	14,592	12,715	7,310
Special Ed. Aveo 1.5 M/T	635,000	69,000	50,392	34,530	26,777	19,056	15,266	13,302	7,610
Special Ed. Aveo 1.5 A/T	675,000	79,000	53,062	36,361	28,196	20,066	16,075	14,007	8,089
Optra 1.6 L M/T	650,000	89,000	49,946	34,225	26,541	18,888	15,131	13,185	7,790
Optra 1.6 L A/T	696,000	89,000	54,042	37,032	28,717	20,436	16,372	14,266	8,341
Optra 1.6 LS M/T	724,000	89,000	56,535	38,740	30,042	21,379	17,127	14,924	8,676
Optra 1.6 LS A/T	770,000	89,000	60,630	41,546	32,218	22,928	18,367	16,005	9,228
Special Ed.Optra 1.6 A/T	795,000	99,000	61,965	42,461	32,927	23,433	18,772	16,357	9,527

Test drive today at your nearest Chevrolet/GM Autoworld dealer: MAKATI 867-8183 to 87 QUEZON AVENUE 374-1250 TO 59 • SHAW 535-4944, 533-6349, 533-8375, 533-1263 PASIG 672-1612 to 14, 672-1486 • ALABANG 771-1206 to 09 • NORTH EDSA 374-9992 to 97, 374-9963 • MANILA 564-0129 • CEBU (032) 234-0426 to 29 • PAMPANGA (045) 963-3333, (045) 860-2000 • DAVAO (082) 300-7777, (082) 235-3811 • DAGUPAN (075) 523-7777, (075) 523-1835, (075) 515-5577

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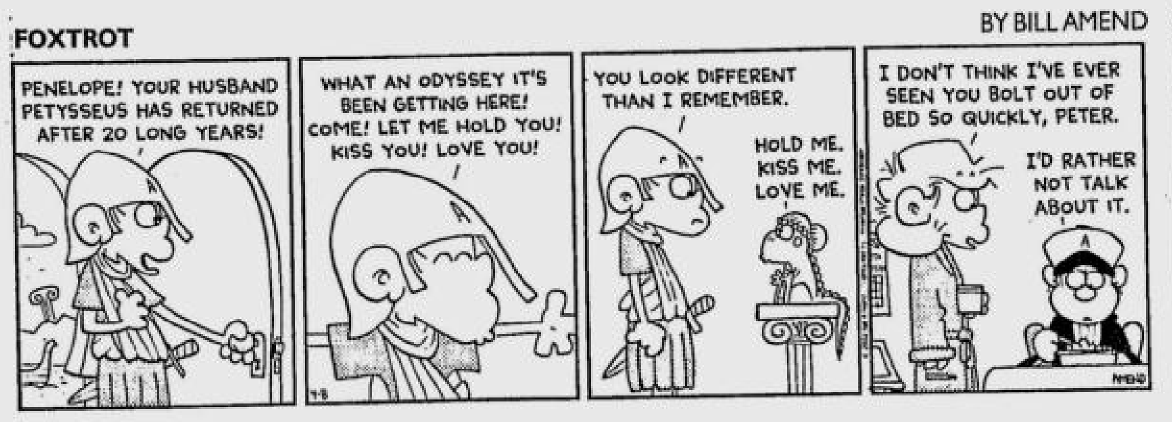
VISIT THE CHEVROLET BOOTH AT THE 2006 MANILA MOTORSHOW, FROM APRIL 6-9 AT THE WORLD TRADE CENTER.

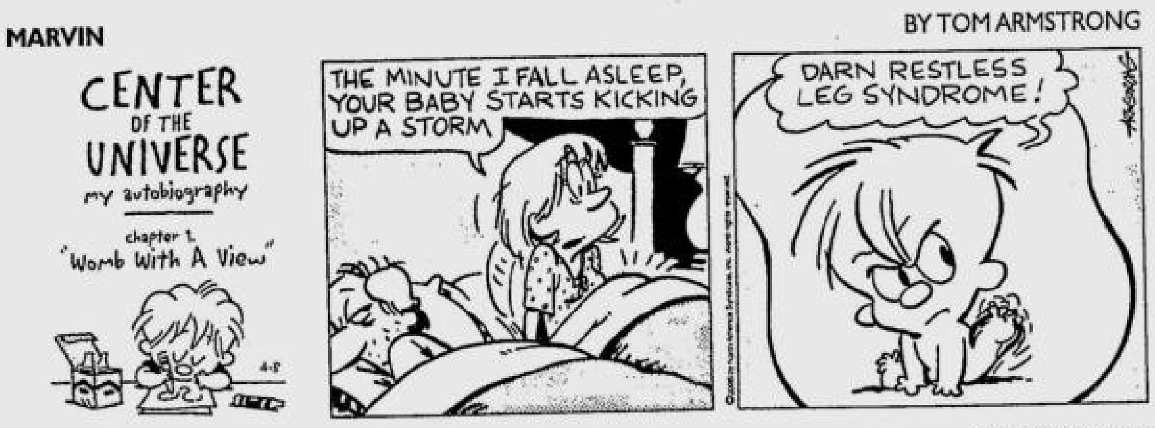
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


PENELOPE! YOUR HUSBAND PETYSSEUS HAS RETURNED AFTER 20 LONG YEARS!
WHAT AN ODYSSEY IT'S BEEN GETTING HERE! COME! LET ME HOLD YOU! KISS YOU! LOVE YOU!
YOU LOOK DIFFERENT THAN I REMEMBER.
HOLD ME. KISS ME. LOVE ME.
I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER SEEN YOU BOLT OUT OF BED SO QUICKLY, PETER.
I'D RATHER NOT TALK ABOUT IT.
4-8
AMEND

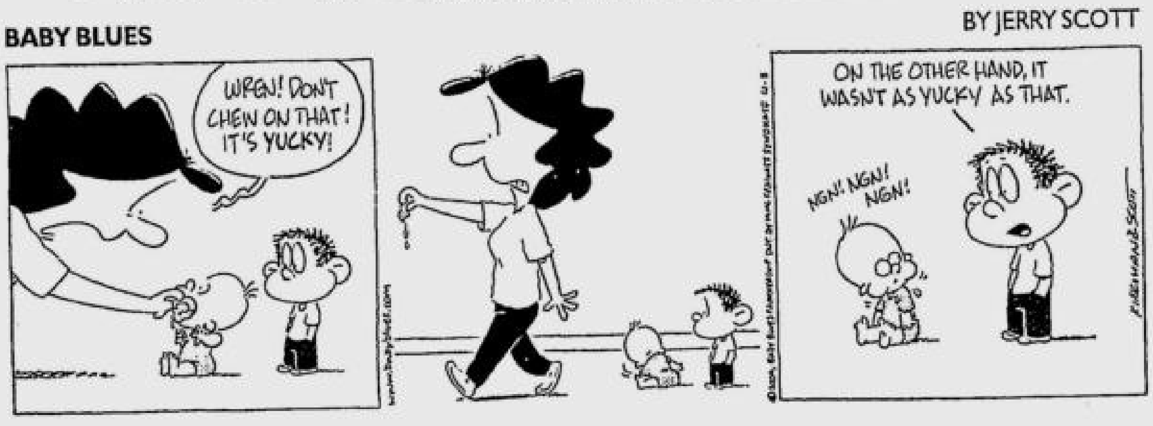
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE
my autobiography
chapter 1. "Womb With A View"
4-8
THE MINUTE I FALL ASLEEP, YOUR BABY STARTS KICKING UP A STORM
DARN RESTLESS LEG SYNDROME!
ARMSTRONG

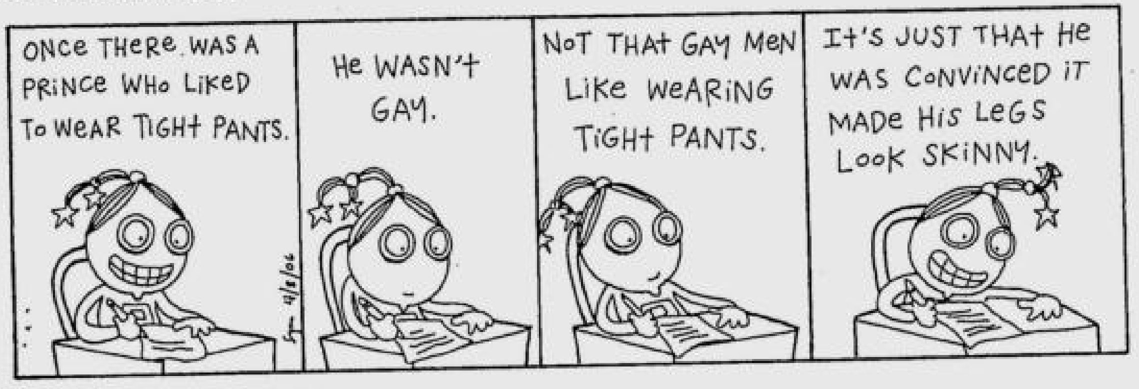
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WRGN! DON'T CHEW ON THAT! IT'S YUCKY!
ON THE OTHER HAND, IT WASN'T AS YUCKY AS THAT.
NGN! NGN! NGN!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


ONCE THERE WAS A PRINCE WHO LIKED TO WEAR TIGHT PANTS.
HE WASN'T GAY.
NOT THAT GAY MEN LIKE WEARING TIGHT PANTS.
IT'S JUST THAT HE WAS CONVINCED IT MADE HIS LEGS LOOK SKINNY.
4/8/06

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're socially aware. You believe in giving back to society. People respect your conscientiousness and ethics. (You're quite philosophical.) No matter how popular you are, many of you are shy; nevertheless, you keep your head in a crisis. You have a strong sense of justice. You always fight for what is right. The year ahead promotes all partnerships and close relationships.
Birthdate of: Patricia Arquette, actress; Betty Ford, former first lady; Kofi Annan, UN secretary general.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be patient with others today. Be careful when driving or walking. Explosive tempers can cause discussions to turn quickly into arguments. Not good!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Power struggles about money are likely today. There could be disputes about who owns what or who is responsible for what. Try to keep a low profile, if you can.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Ego conflicts are inevitable. Either you are trying to control the activities of somebody else, or somebody is trying to do this to you. Either way, it's meddling.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You have ideas about how to improve things at work; others don't agree. Don't get into loggerheads about this. Maybe you have to agree to disagree.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Conflict with a friend or a member of a group is likely today. Why not just step aside? After all, it takes two to make a fight.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Conflict with authority figures is highly possible today. Try to avoid this. You don't have to agree with bosses, parents and VIPs, but you don't have to openly disagree with them either.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You might be so keen to express your views about religious, spiritual or political matters that you end up alienating others. Is this worth it? (Ask yourself this.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Avoid dangerous neighborhoods today. Don't tempt any situation that encourages crime or violence. There is an element of this strongly present today.

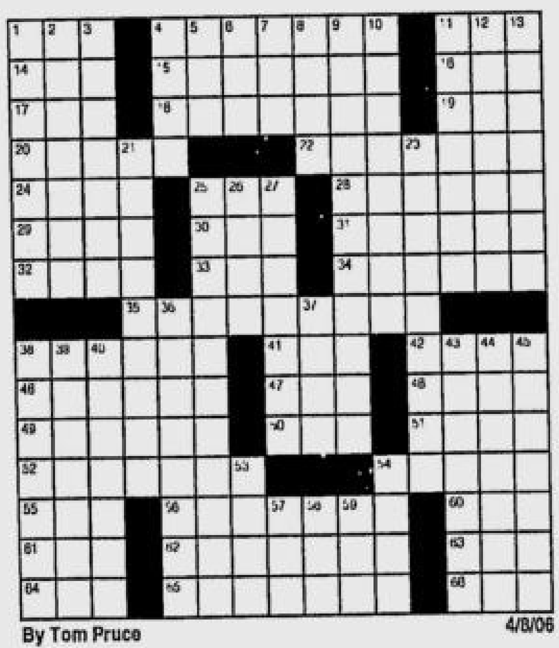
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Use your patience and your diplomacy to deal with partners and close friends today. Other people are pushy with you. Don't be pushy back. Pushy on both sides just leads to unhappiness.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Don't expect co-workers to agree with your ideas for reform or improving where you work. They might, or they might not. You have to respect this.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might feel obsessed about artistic or romantic subjects today. Don't get carried away. You won't be thinking straight. Just do nothing. (People are too intense.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You have tons of energy to make improvements to where you live today. If you live alone, this is fine. If you live with others, try to respect their wishes as well.

DAILY CROSSWORD


4/8/06

By Tom Pruce
Chicago, IL

ACROSS
1 Faucet
4 Shaw play, "Major ___"
11 Carpentry tool
14 Tint
15 Commanded
16 Big galoot
17 Mess up
18 More mean
19 Yap or kisser
20 Dine at home
22 Tree-worshipper
24 Alda or Bates
25 Call off
28 Sloped-roof shelter
29 Cut
30 Bossy's greeting
31 Draw air
32 Actress Daly
33 Clairvoyant's letters
34 Chewed (on)
35 Strident crier
38 Writer Christie
41 Feedbag grain
42 Say it ___ sol
46 One of the Hemingways
47 Avail oneself of
48 Play lead
49 Did some carpentry work
50 Five after five
51 Dislike intensely
52 Country settled by freed slaves
54 One of a sailing trio
55 Wallach of "The Magnificent Seven"
56 Begin, for one
60 Upper limit
61 Poseidon's domain
62 Blight victim
63 Corner pipe
64 2,000 pounds
65 Ushers after intermission
66 Needle feature

DOWN
1 Cold War side
2 By ear
3 Relate
4 Small town in Germany?
5 Southern constellation
6 Hwys.
7 Ticket at a racetrack
8 Song by Puccini
9 Preach to the choir, in a way
10 Actress Barbeau
11 Bay of Lake Huron
12 Disciple
13 Like many aquatic animals
21 Segment of an alimentary canal
23 Hindu teacher of mysticism
25 Nickname for Ireland
26 Honker
27 Get the skinny
36 Happier
37 Instance
38 Most spacious
39 Italian astronomer
40 Horse breed
43 Marvel Comics man
44 How fops are dressed
45 Foot-operated lever
53 Lethal weapons
54 Meat or fruit dishes
57 Gobbled up
58 Bullpen stat
59 Do-over tennis service

Friday's Puzzle Solved

A	K	I	N		I	T	I	S	I		O	A	R	S
L	A	C	E		M	E	T	O	O		A	L	O	T
E	M	E	R		F	A	T	T	U	E	S	D	A	Y
C	A	R	F	E	R	R	Y			D	I	A	N	E
			B	L	E	U		L	O	I	S			
G	R	E	A	S	E	P	A	I	N	T		M	G	M
H	A	L	L	F			M	M	E	S		A	R	E
O	V	A	L		Q	T	I	P	S		O	R	E	L
S	E	T		D	U	E	S			B	U	L	G	E
T	S	E		O	I	L	S	H	O	R	T	A	G	E
			D	O	Z	E		O	L	A	F			
C	A	P	O	N			W	I	D	E	O	P	E	N
B	U	T	T	E	R	D	I	S	H		X	R	A	Y
E	T	A	T		V	O	L	T	A		E	E	R	S
R	O	S	Y		S	A	Y	S	T		S	Y	N	E

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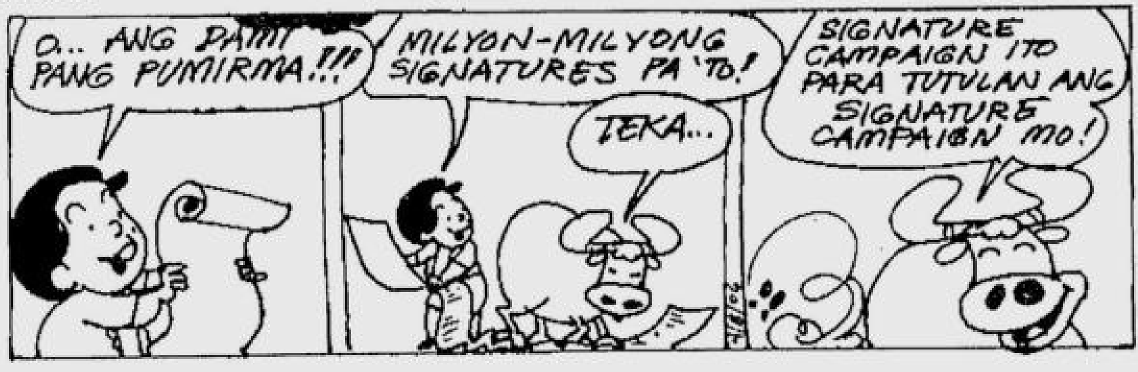
4/8/06

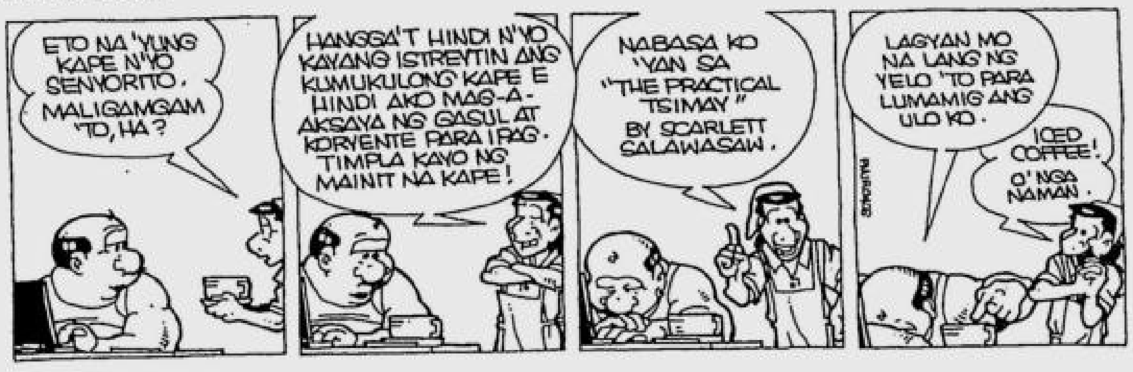
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


O... ANG DAMI PANG PUMIRMA!!!
MILYON-MILYONG SIGNATURES PA 'TO!
TEKA...
SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN ITO PARA TUTULAN ANG SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN MO!

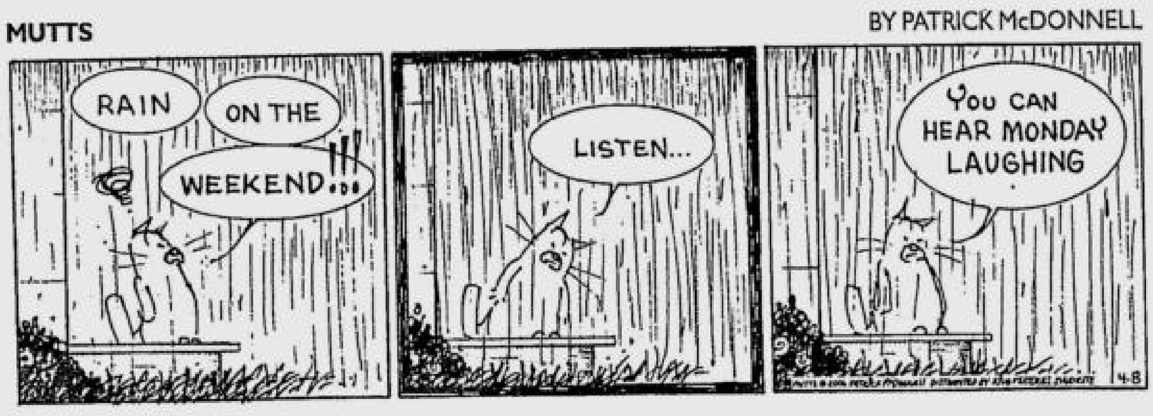
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ETO NA 'YUNG KAPE N'YO SENYORITO. MALIGAMGAM 'TO, HA?
HANGGA'T HINDI N'YO KAYANG ISTREYTIN ANG KUMUKULONG KAPE E HINDI AKO MAG-A-AKSAYA NG GASUL AT KORYENTE PARA IPAG-TIMPLA KAYO NG MAINIT NA KAPE!
NABASA KO 'YAN SA "THE PRACTICAL TSIMAY" BY SCARLETT SALAWASAW.
LAGYAN MO NA LANG NG YELO 'TO PARA LUMAMIG ANG ULO KO.
ICED COFFEE!
O' NGA NAMAN.

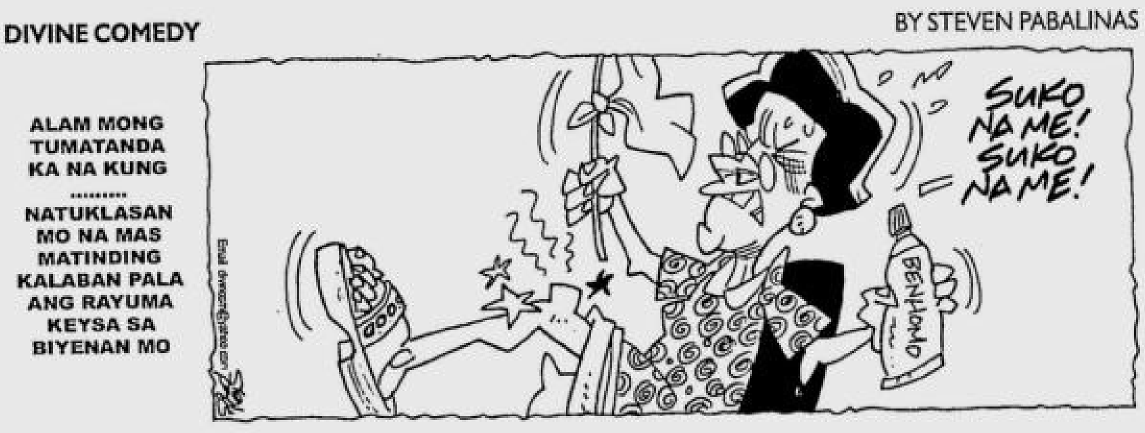
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


RAIN
ON THE
WEEKEND!!!
LISTEN...
YOU CAN HEAR MONDAY LAUGHING
4-8

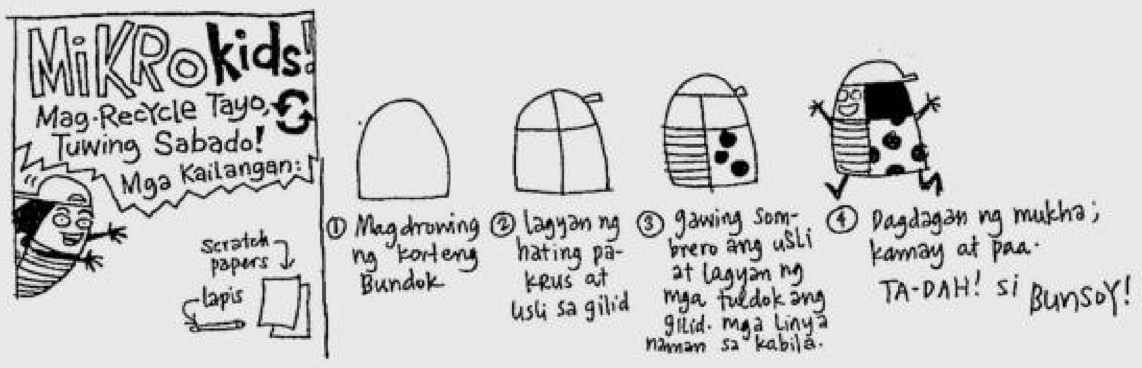
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ALAM MONG TUMATANDA KA NA KUNG
....
NATUKLASAN MO NA MAS MATINDING KALABAN PALA ANG RAYUMA KEYSA SA BIYENAN MO
SUKO NA ME! SUKO NA ME!
BENHOMO

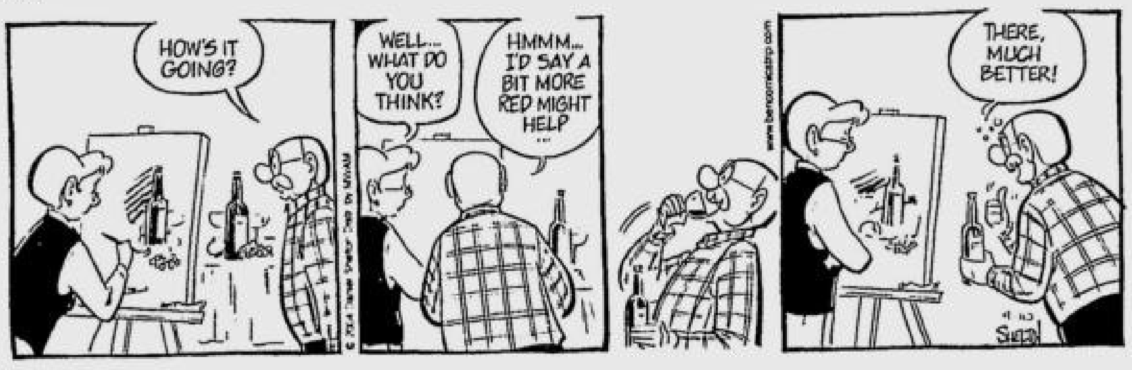
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MiKRokids!
Mag-Recycle Tayo, Tuwing Sabado!
Mga Kailangan:
Scratch papers
lapis
① Magdrowing ng korteng Bundok
② Lagyan ng hating pa-krus at usli sa gilid
③ gawing sombrero ang usli at lagyan ng mga tuldok ang gilid. mga linya naman sa kabila.
④ Dagdagan ng mukha; kamay at paa.
TA-DAH! si Bunsoy!

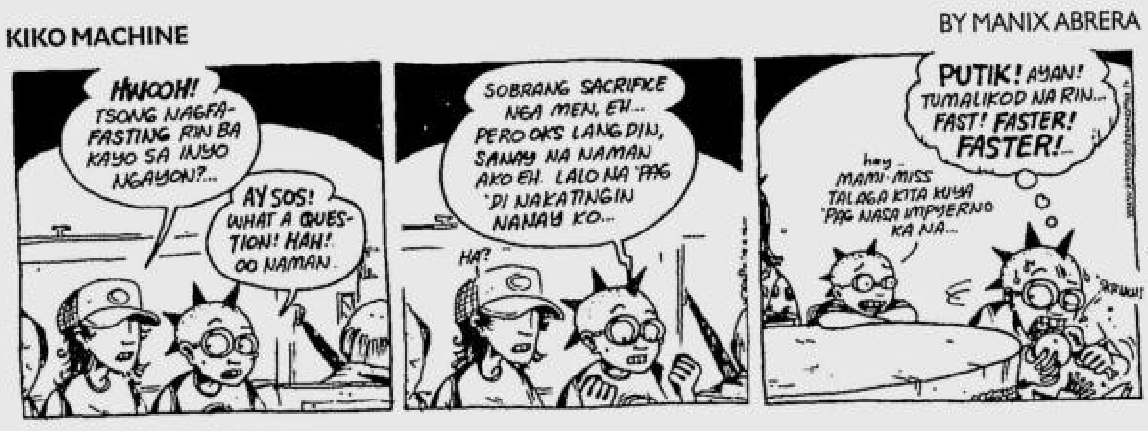
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HOW'S IT GOING?
WELL... WHAT DO YOU THINK?
HMMM... I'D SAY A BIT MORE RED MIGHT HELP...
THERE, MUCH BETTER!
www.bencomicstrip.com

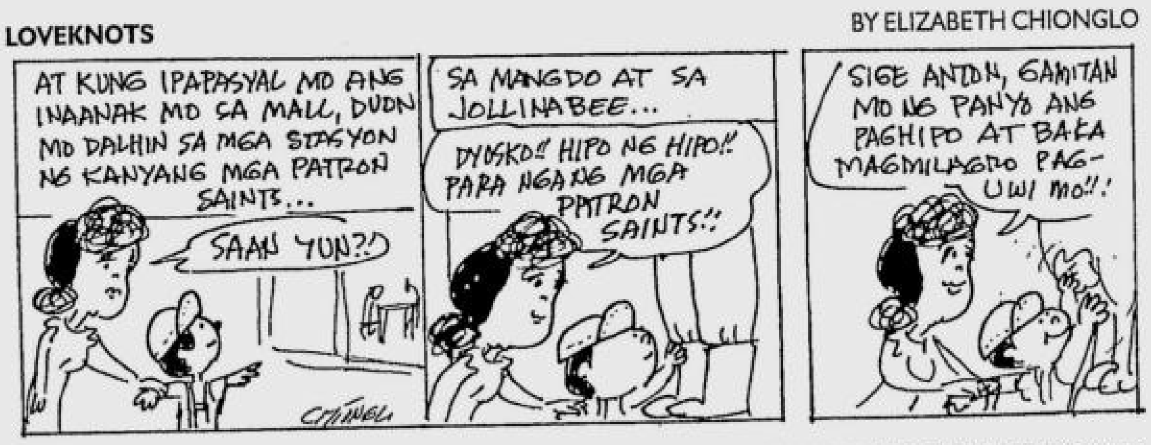
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOOH! TSONG NAGFA-FASTING RIN BA KAYO SA INYO NGAYON?..
AY SOS! WHAT A QUESTION! HAH! OO NAMAN.
SOBRANG SACRIFICE NGA MEN, EH... PERO OKS LANG DIN, SANAY NA NAMAN AKO EH. LALO NA 'PAG 'DI NAKATINGIN NANAY KO...
HA?
PUTIK! AYAN! TUMALIKOD NA RIN... FAST! FASTER! FASTER!..
hay... MAMI-MISS TALAGA KITA KUYA 'PAG NASA IMPYERNO KA NA...

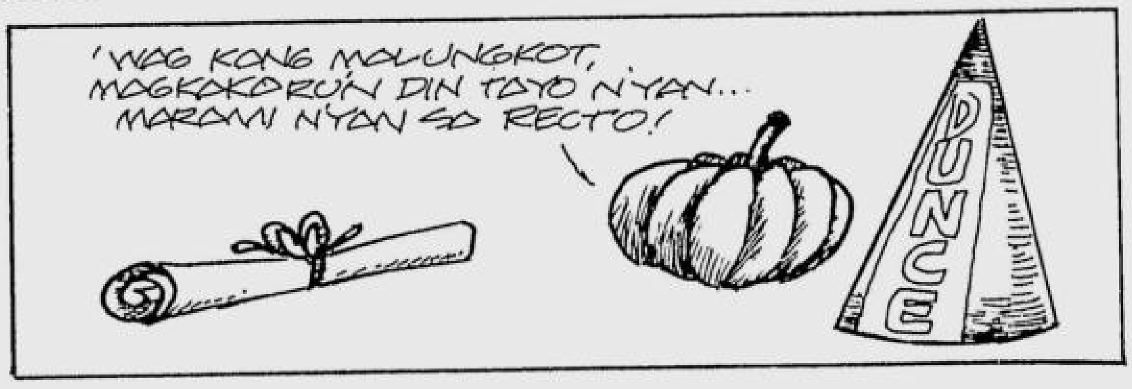
LOVEKNOTS

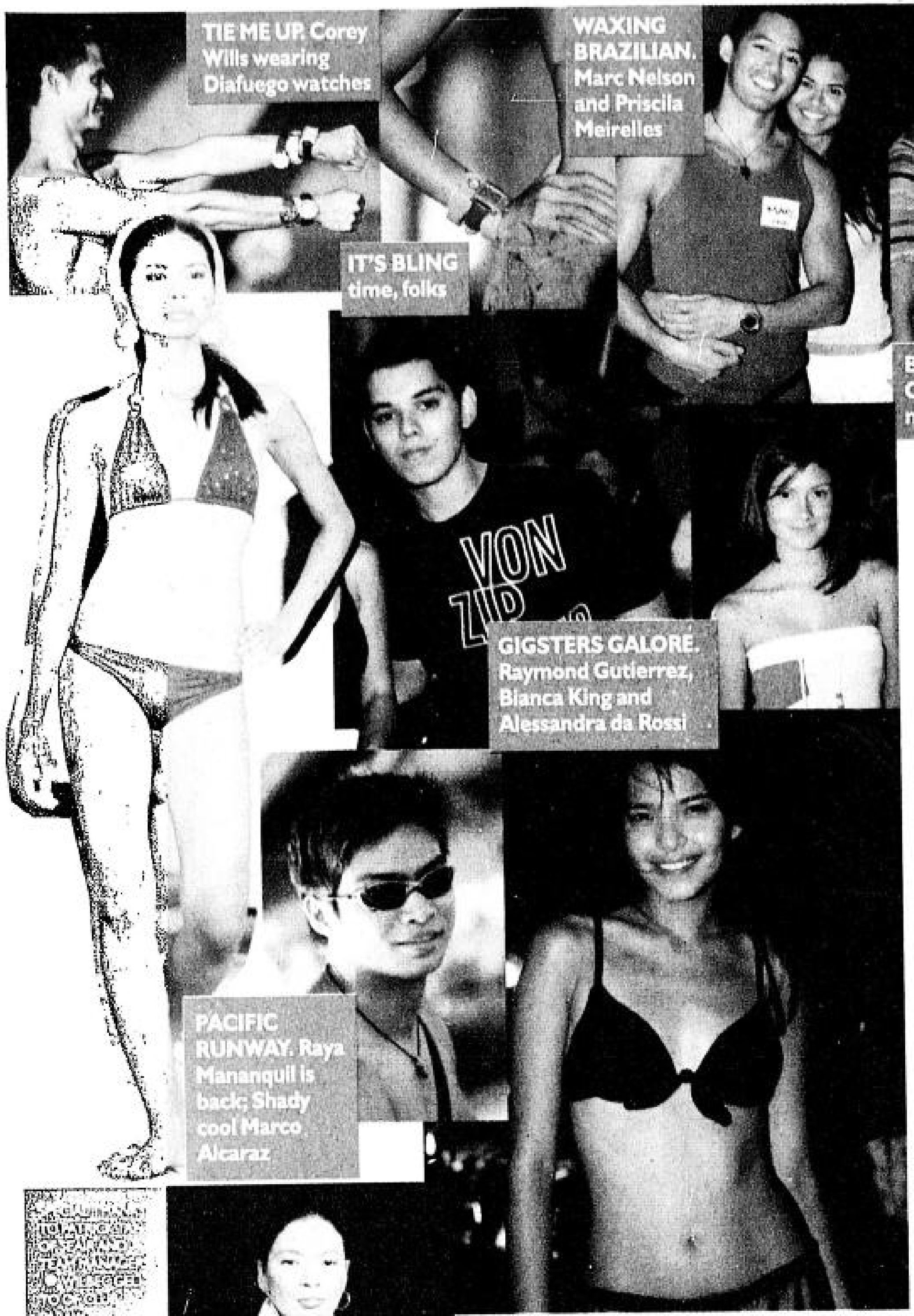
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


AT KUNG IPAPASYAL MO ANG INAANAK MO SA MALL, DOON MO DALHIN SA MGA STASYON NG KANYANG MGA PATRON SAINTS...
SAAN YUN?!
SA MANGDO AT SA JOLLINABEE...
DYOSKO!! HIPO NG HIPO!! PARA NGA NG MGA PATRON SAINTS!!
SIGE ANTON, GAMITAN MO NG PANYO ANG PAGHIPO AT BAKA MAGMILAGRO PAG-UWI MO!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


'WAG KONG MALUNGKOT, MAGKAKARO'N DIN TAYO N'YAN... MARAMI N'YAN SA RECTO!
DUNCE



TIE ME UP. Corey Wills wearing Diafuego watches

IT'S BLING time, folks

WAXING BRAZILIAN. Marc Nelson and Priscila Meirelles

GIGSTERS GALORE. Raymond Gutierrez, Bianca King and Alessandra da Rossi

PACIFIC RUNWAY. Raya Mananquil is back; Shady cool Marco Alcaraz

BORACAY Mayor Dong Cawaling with the top models of our time

Boracay's 'Forever Summer' has started via PMAP's Modelympics—a project of Mayor Dong Cawaling

[illegible] TIROL OF WHITE HOUSE

FLEX IT. Omuse [illegible]

RUNWAY BUBBLES. Coming soon to a TV show near you.

Going for the gold ... model

From page E1

lotion mixed with sweat caused by the anticipation of the game. Each team was to race on foot to 12 different resorts and perform a task in each one in no particular order. Our strategy was to start with the farthest resort working our way back to the finish line. Thanks to fellow teammate **Bianca King**, who knew Boracay like the back of her hand, she managed to lead us to each resort without a second lost.

I felt like we were part of a reality TV show, as the camera crew of my other teammate **Raymond Gutierrez** followed. During the race, we would run across several teams, some determined to get to their next stop, others happy to distract their competitors. A person from the other team stopped Raymond and requested for a photo op mid-race, which caused him to be left behind.

"It's a delaying tactic!," I laughed as I grabbed the young star and ran.

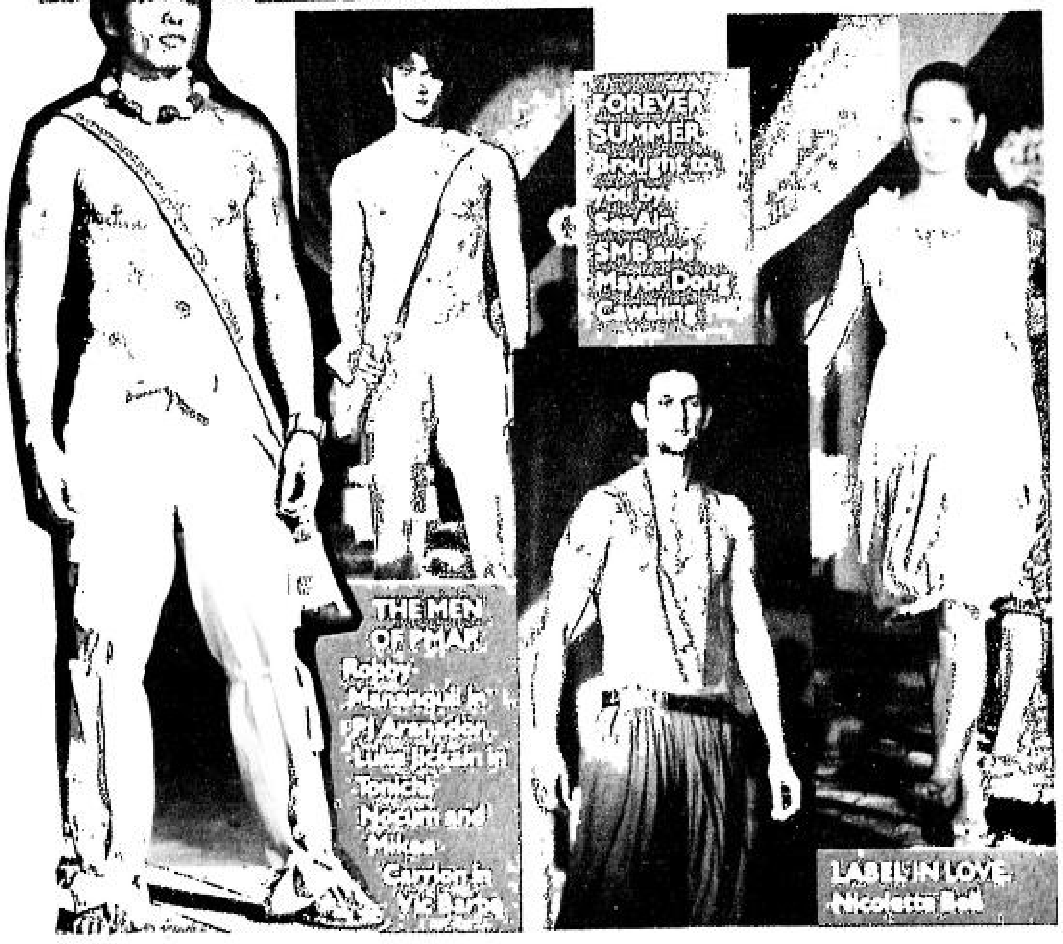
From climbing bamboo poles, filling buckets with seawater to swimming—each task brought out the fun, competitive edge in everyone. **Jing Monis** suffered from muscle cramps but nevertheless pulled through for his blue team, finishing 1st runner-up. **Robby Carmona**, also from the blue team, couldn't complain. As he jokingly mentioned before the start of the race, "I'm a jinx! I always lose in these island races!"

As each team made it to the finish line, many couldn't help but collapse in the sand and smile, for they knew that despite their aching body and blistered feet, tonight they would ease the pain with a drink or two.

* * *

Thanks to South East Asian Airlines for getting everyone to Caticlan in just 35 minutes; to Rockwell, for supporting the Professional Models Association of the Philippines in organizing the Modelympics; to the office of the Mayor of Malay, for letting us celebrate the start of summer in Boracay; and to Cyma, for the excellent Greek food to suit my vegetarian palette.

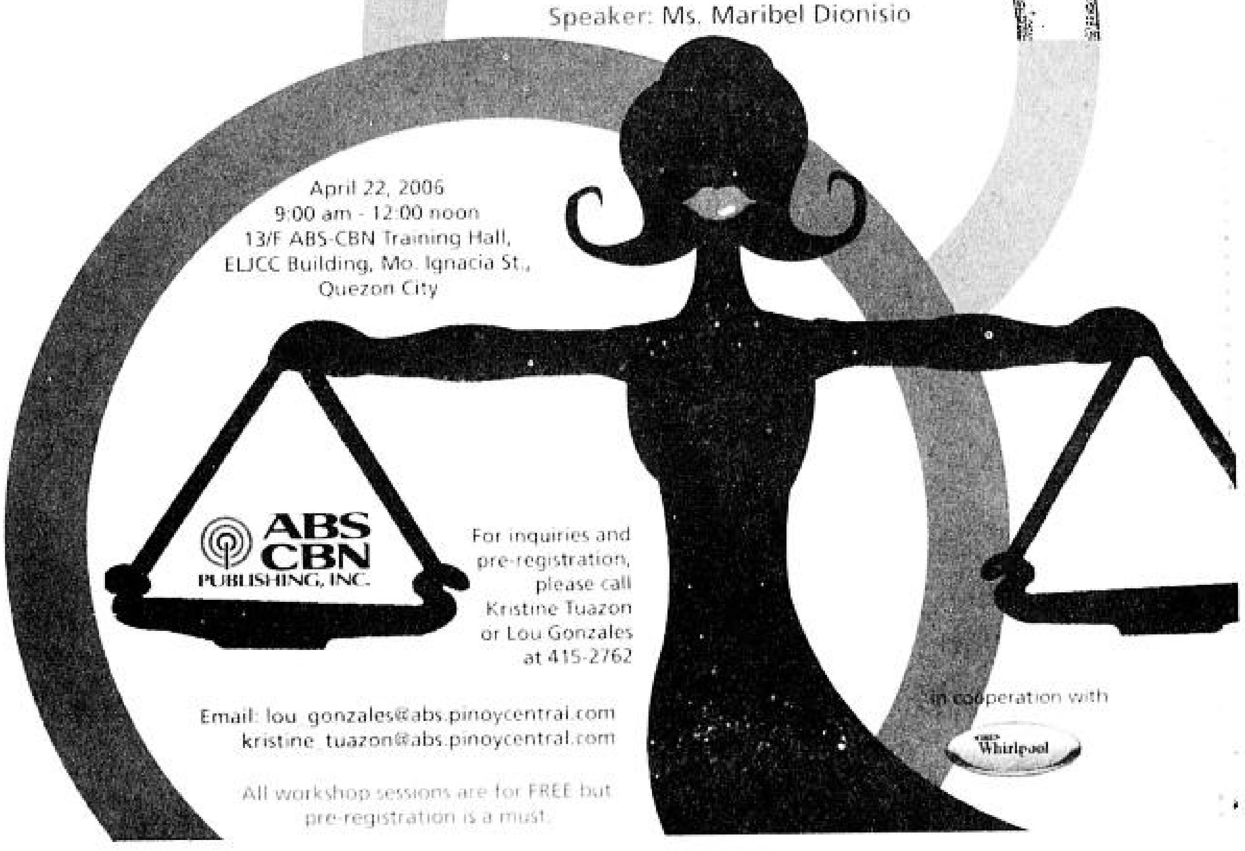
E-mail the author: eatyourtofu@yahoo.com



FOREVER SUMMER. [illegible] Mayor Dong Cawaling

THE MEN OF PMAP. [illegible]

LABEL IN LOVE. Nicoletta [illegible]



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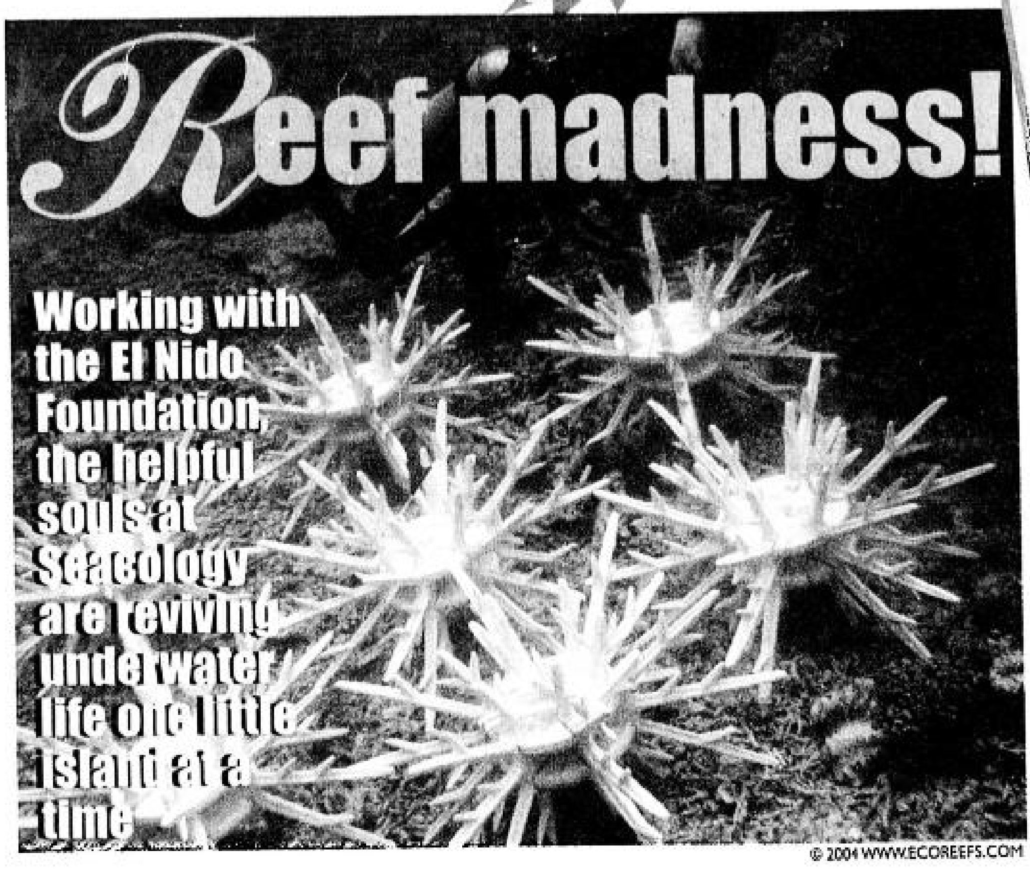
Reef madness!

Working with the El Nido Foundation, the helpful souls at Seacology are reviving underwater life one little island at a time



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Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

NAVIGATING THE NEVER-ENDING weekend known as my life, I recently dropped anchor at the sun-flooded tourism outpost of El Nido—Español for "The Nido," wink—to indulge my eco warrior wannabe fantasies. Saving the seas is just one of the things I do in my downtime—even if it's from the comfort of the infinity pool in my mind—and boy, was I in luck. Together with authentic ocean junkies, I witnessed a scientific splash like nothing I've ever seen on "Baywatch," among other shore things.

Sea + ecology = Seacology, baby

"We all need some good news," so goes Leigh Perez. She participated in an EcoReef installation in Indonesia and decided to take the excellent idea home to the Philippines. On behalf of the El Nido Foundation, she wrote a proposal to Seacology, a US-based nonprofit environmental organization that seeks to preserve the "highly endangered biodiversity of islands throughout the world."

CLASSIC ROCK. 250 million-year-old limestone formations

OH MY, starry-eyed surprise

AHOY, DUDE. Me, two shades darker

PHOTOS BY GINO DE LA PAZ

You see, in our attention deficit democracy, it's disturbingly easy to forego environmental issues in favor of economic ones. Seacology, however, shoots for "win-win situations where both the local environment is protected and islanders receive some tangible benefit for doing so." What's that? I hear Nemo screaming "Hooray!"

"The beauty of the Philippines is second to none. It's very fragile," observes Duane Silverstein, Seacology executive director. Dynamite fishing and other illegal methods have banged up Palawan's coral reefs. And when ethereal aquatic cradles like that get trashed, the marine creatures that call it home kick the bucket as well. Of course, it's never too late to pitch in.

Underwater snowflakes

By all means, reef regeneration is not a quick thing. In the past, other environmental NGOs have used structures made out of tires as artificial reefs. Some groups have even parked wrecked cars and parts of ships to facilitate coral restoration. The downside? First of all, rubber tires leach nasty chemicals, so they could act more as booby-traps than lifesavers. Boo. Second, while sunken ships and the like make for interesting underwater vistas, they are sadly out of sync with the natural environment. After all, the sea is not a junkyard.

Fortunately, the multi-pronged EcoReef modules that Seacology has donated and subsequently mounted do not resemble Michelin tires or your mom's old Volvo. Instead, they are pH-neutral ceramic formations that resemble bigass snowflakes.

"Marine biologists are still experimenting with the shape of the module that works," continues Duane. But judging the thriving coral and fish population in Bunaken National Park, Indonesia, the world's first EcoReef installation site, location number 2, El Nido, should reap the same benefits.

Sea and be seen

"Palawan is special because it has over 1,700 of the country's 7,107 islands," shares Alberto Lim, president of Ten Knots Development Corporation, the company behind El Nido Resorts. Kiddos, wrap your brains around that for a second.

Strong community involvement is key when it comes to endeavors like this one. Whether it's cheering on the volunteer divers or teaching the youth about the importance of coral reefs in sustaining fish biomass in the area, local El Nido residents have jumped into the coral reef restoration and education project, promising long-term benefits for everyone.

That Sunday, I watched the Seacology dudes do their thing, lowering and tacking down 100 EcoReefs in the marine area surrounding three uninhabited islands, Tres Marias. A total of 626 EcoReef modules are earmarked for this area, with subsequent installations planned on May 20, May 27, June 3, and June 10, 2006.

Being a noncertified diver (I was hung over during an intro dive years ago so I was traumatized and gave up completely), I merely observed the event from a nearby boat. But—surprise!—it was enough to revive my appreciation for nature. Yup, I realized all that while swaying to the rhythmic writhing of the ocean and singing off-key to the tunes in my iPod. Seasickness rocks!

Mental souvenirs

Back at the resort, I found my sea legs and jogged back to the dozen or so diversions I experienced that weekend.

Number one was a kayaking expedition around the small lagoon in Miniloc Island. Surrounded by limestone cliffs and a posse of gangsta jellyfish, that brief visit yielded awesome meditative rewards.

SHORE THING. Pangulasian Island at high noon

Second was my pitstop at Vigan Island, known popularly as Snake Island. The slightly craggy landscape gave way to the sapphire sea, which in turn lapped the soft, creamy sand. I was on my best behavior then so I resisted the urge to hurl a live starfish around like a boomerang. "Best behavior," in this case, meant "Ritalin." Kidding.

Rounding off my list was a three-way tie: Sunset cocktails at Pangulasian Island, a private dinner at Entalula Island, and my suite at El Nido Resorts Lagen Island. I know—you can take the kid out of the city but you can't take the city out of the kid. After a couple days of learning, like, important stuff about the environment, it was cool to be pampered and get the hang of doing nothing again.

Redefining the word "retreat," the few days I spent as a scintillatingly sunburned busybody around the islands of El Nido were both relaxing and enlightening. The world we live in is as old as history and as new as next week; as its owners, we should do what we can to take care of it, pinching a few mental souvenirs along the way.

Check out www.seacology.org, www.ecoreefs.com, and www.eldnidoresorts.com. For questions on the El Nido EcoReefs Project, contact Maius Marcelo, executive director, El Nido Foundation at ircmarcelo@hotmail.com or tel. (632) 687-1799.

To book your stay at El Nido Resorts, contact Ten Knots Development Corporation, 2/F Builders Centre Building, 170 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village Makati City. Tel. (632) 894-5644 Fax. (632) 810 3620. For flight reservations call Island Transvoyager, Inc. Tel. (632) 851-5674. Ayos!

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